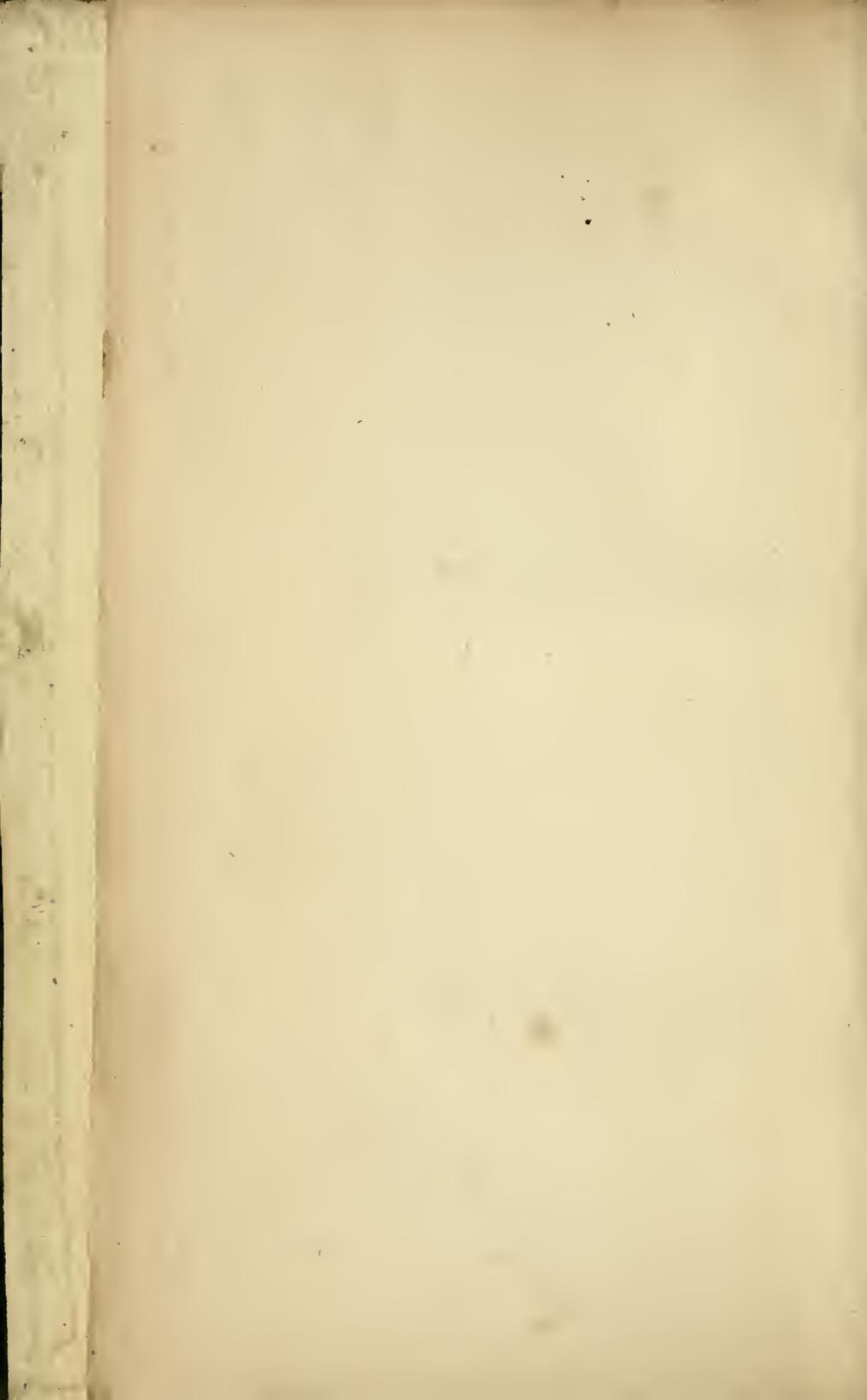


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MUSICAL MEMOIRS.

VOL. II.



X

MUSICAL MEMOIRS;

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

GENERAL STATE OF MUSIC
IN ENGLAND,

FROM THE FIRST COMMEMORATION OF HANDEL,
IN 1784, TO THE YEAR 1830.

INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS ANECDOTES,
MUSICAL, HISTRIONIC, &c.

BY W. T. PARKE,

FORTY YEARS PRINCIPAL OBOIST TO THE
THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MUSICAL MEMOIRS.

1806.

NATIVE music in England had now arrived to such a degree of perfection, as to enable the English to vie with the Italian stage ; and though the latter had lost none of its attractions amongst the *haut-ton*, (who, without an Italian opera would be overwhelmed with ennui,) yet the former divided the attention of the public with its foreign rival. It has been asserted by a modern English traveller, and “travellers see strange things,” that England is not a musical country, because he had heard two or three boatmen in Germany sing a song in parts, who, for aught the traveller knew, neither sung in time, in tune, nor in correct harmony. He concludes, perhaps, that the children of that musical nation sing *in parts* as instinctively as (according to another traveller)

those of the black divers on the pearl coast swim! As a further proof of the traveller's correctness, we have at the present time some newly-imported itinerant vocalists of that musical nation parading the streets and suburbs of London, whose singing (in parts) is such as would justify any one in saying with Benedict,—“ If I had a dog howl'd so, I'd hang him.” The assertion, however, that the English are not a musical nation, implies, either that the English have not collectively a genius for music, or that individually they have no taste for it. If such are the inferences to be deduced, the traveller's position is founded in error, as the long list of eminent composers, singers, and instrumental performers this country has produced, would overturn the former, while the general cultivation of the art exposes the fallacy of the latter. Indeed the study of music in this country has become as general as if the British legislature (like that of ancient Athens) had passed a law to compel parents to educate their offspring in that elegant accomplishment. It is true that in England native talent is not so generally patronised among the highest ranks of society as in some countries on the continent, which may be accounted for by their foolish partiality to whatever is foreign, whether it be an Indian handkerchief, or an Italian singer. It is but justice however to

observe, that, although general patronage has not been abundant, there have not been wanting distinguished partialists, who, imitating the enlightened liberality and good taste of the illustrious heir to the throne, George Prince of Wales, have nurtured and stimulated British genius to that emulative exertion, which has at length conducted the art of music in England to its present state of superior excellence.

The first novelty at the King's Theatre was Nasolini's grand serious opera 'La Morte di Cleopatra,' represented for the first time in this country on the 4th of March. The music of that great master, Nasolini, was admirably sung by Grassini and Braham, and went off with great *éclat*; but the principal production of the season was Mozart's grand serious opera, 'La Clemenza di Tito,' performed for the first time in England on the 27th of March, for Billington's benefit. In this charming opera Billington, who was ably supported by Braham, made a display of talent rarely witnessed; and the music stamps the composer of it as the greatest musical genius of the age. Mrs. Billington, with whom I had lived on terms of friendly intimacy for several years, sent me a ticket, and requested I would witness the first performance of 'La Clemenza di Tito,' which I did. I was highly gratified with the refined science, ele-

gant taste, and natural simplicity displayed in this fine production. 'La Clemenza di Tito' was the first of Mozart's operas performed in this country. A new singer, Signor Naldi, appeared for the first time on the 15th of April, in Guiglielmi's comic opera, 'Le due Nozze ed un Marito.' Signor Naldi's voice was a baritone of great power, compass, and flexibility; and he was an excellent actor. This was the last season of Mrs. Billington's performing at the Italian Opera House. She had been there four seasons, during which period she had met with such munificent patronage as perhaps never had before been extended to any singer who had preceded her on that stage.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre were this year sung by Signora Storace, Mrs. Salmon, Mrs. Dickons, and Mr. Braham, with great success.

In addition to the concert of ancient music, and the vocal concert, four were given, for the first time, by Mr. Raimondi, at the Pantheon. They commenced on the 3rd of March, and were ably led by himself. The singers were Madame Bianchi and Signor Morelli. The latter was encored in an Italian comic song, which he sang with such effect, that even those who did not understand the language could not refrain from laughter. Without meaning to underrate the admirable talent of Signor Morelli, it may be ob-

served, that many perhaps laughed to make others believe that they did understand it. This piece was followed by a concerto on the violoncello by Linley, given in the universal language of genius.

An opera on a novel plan was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 22nd of January, under the title of 'The Travellers, or Music's Fascination;' the music of which (composed by Corri) professed to describe the styles of the four quarters of the world. The singers in it were Signora Storace, Mrs. Bland, Mr. Braham, Mr. Bannister, and Mr. Dignum, who all exerted themselves with the happiest effect. Corri, the musical "cosmographer" in this piece, executed his task with much ability. While this opera was in rehearsal Dignum, who, though there might have been many wiser than himself, was seldom exceeded in good-nature, was expatiating in the green-room on his partiality for scene-painting, in the presence of Mr. Greenwood, the admirable painter to that theatre, who politely said to him, "as you are fond of that style, Mr. Dignum, if you will step up to the painting-room to-morrow I will let you see some of those done for the new forth-coming opera." Dignum went up accordingly, and Mr. Greenwood and his assistants showed him two or three of a very superior description, though they were, like all scene-

painting, extremely coarse, in order to produce the intended effect at a distance. Dignum, who was enraptured, exclaimed with great energy,—“ Ah! these are delightful,—how grand!—what rich colouring!—Well, I would not give a rush for fine paintings. These are the sort to please me.”

At the opening of Vauxhall Gardens on the 16th of June, a gala was given of unprecedented splendour. Among the fine overtures performed in the concert, were Haydn’s ‘ Surprise,’ and Arne’s ‘ Thomas and Sally.’ The admirable Gavotte in the latter (obligato for the bassoon) was finely performed by Mr. Holmes, principal bassoon at the King’s Theatre.

Two new musical pieces were brought out at the winter theatres since their opening in September, one of which, for particular reasons, I shall pass over. The other, called ‘ Tekeli, or the Siege of Montgatz,’ was produced with great effect at Drury Lane Theatre on the 24th of November. This piece was written by Mr. Theodore Hook. The music, composed by Mr. Hook, (his father,) displayed an appropriate diversity of style, and much fine melody. If it was not always original, it was always pleasing, and therefore much applauded.

The King’s Theatre opened on the 13th of December, with Portogallo’s grand serious opera

‘ Semiramide.’ It may be observed here, that it is common with the Italian composers to set the same dramas. In this opera Madame Catalani made her first appearance in England. The great fame this lady had acquired on the continent attracted one of the fullest houses ever witnessed at the opening of the theatre. Madame Catalani’s voice was extremely rich, powerful, and of great compass and flexibility. She sang with great ease, and in rapidity of execution she was only exceeded by Mrs. Billington. Her performance throughout the opera diffused universal pleasure, and the applause she received was abundant and well deserved.

1807.

On the 3d of January, Madame Catalani appeared for the second time at the King’s Theatre in the serious opera ‘ Semiramide,’ with increased effect. Viganoni, who was not engaged this season, was succeeded by Signor Righi, a respectable singer, though not equal to his predecessor; Signora Perrini and Signor Siboni were engaged for the comic opera. Signora Perrini sang with ability, and was a tolerable actress. The voice of Siboni was not extensive, but he managed it with skill. Morelli was not engaged till the 7th of April, when he and Naldi appeared

in Guiglielmi's comic opera 'La Virtuosa in Margellina.' Morelli's return was hailed with general acclamation. Catalani's first benefit took place on the 15th of April, when she performed in 'La Morte di Mitridate' with extraordinary effect. Her acting was as distinguished as her singing. At her second benefit, on the 16th of July, to show the diversity of her talents, she gave the first act of the before-named serious opera, and the first act of the comic opera, 'Il fanatico per la musica,' in both of which she was excellent. Catalani had during the whole of the season experienced such an extravagant degree of public patronage as even went beyond that bestowed on Billington, which it was thought could not be exceeded. This proves that popularity is inconstant, whether it attaches to a conquering hero, or to the heroine of an Italian opera, and may well be illustrated by the soliloquy of Lord Grizzle, in Fielding's humorous burlesque of 'Tom Thumb': "Glory, what art thou? A Monmouth Street laced coat, gracing my back to-day, and to-morrow glittering on the back of another."

The oratorios, which began on Friday the 17th of February, at Covent Garden Theatre, produced no other novelty than the re-appearance of Mrs. Dickons, who, after a considerable absence, resumed her professional career. Her voice and

finished style were very effective in 'Ye sacred priests,' and 'Let the bright seraphim.' The latter was loudly encored.

In addition to the concert of ancient music and the vocal concert, subscription concerts, conducted by the elder Sapi, were given at the houses of some of the nobility, in which Madame Catalani was the principal singer. The first took place at the Marchioness of Stafford's, on the 4th of March. Salomon led the band, and Mr. J. B. Cramer presided at the piano-forte. The company, including the Prince of Wales and several of the royal dukes, were of the first distinction.

The winter theatres were not prolific this year in musical productions. The only one of that kind was at Drury Lane Theatre, brought out on the 3d of January, called 'False Alarms, or My Cousin,' written by Mr. Kenny. The music was composed by Mr. M. P. King. This piece, which had the powerful aid of Signora Storace, Mrs. Bland, and Mr. Braham, was received with the utmost applause. The music displayed sweetness and variety.

The opening fête at Vauxhall Gardens, on the 12th of June, was attended by seven thousand persons, many of whom were of the first distinction. In the concert, in addition to my oboe

concerto, one was performed on the trumpet by Mr. Schmidt, which was greatly applauded.

At Covent Garden Theatre a new comic opera was performed, for the first time, on the 17th of November, called 'Two Faces under a Hood,' written by Mr. T. Dibdin. The music, by Mr. Shield, displayed in some parts that composer's best talent, particularly the elegant and admirably sung air by Mrs. Dickons, 'As gaily peeps the morning.' Incledon's impassioned song, and Fawcett's 'Hey down derry,' were varied and excellent specimens of the composer's powerful genius. A whimsical circumstance occurred the day before this opera came out. Incledon, who was rather a *gourmand*, came to me during the rehearsal of the 'Two Faces under a Hood,' and particularly requested I would dine with him on that day; adding, "Don't be later than four, or you will spoil the John-Dory." I went to his house at the time appointed, where I met a party of ladies and gentlemen from Manchester, who were his particular friends. Soon afterwards we sat down to the table, at the head of which was a large dish of fresh herrings; but no John-Dory was to be seen. The whole party, except Incledon and his wife, partook of the herrings; and some of the gentlemen being helped a second time,

the bottom of the dish was discovered, on which a lady suddenly exclaimed, “ Bless me ! Mrs. Incledon, what fish do you call that ?” Mrs. Incledon, evidently in the secret, said to her husband, awkwardly, “ What fish is that, Mr. Incledon ?”—“ Oh, my dear,” replied he, “ that’s a John-Dory.” The company were invited, of course, to partake of ugly John ; but having already eaten fish, they declined, on which Incledon and his wife devoured the whole of it with great avidity !

1808.

The King’s Theatre did not open this season till the 9th of January, when Madame Catalani appeared in the comic opera ‘ *La Freschetana*.’ She sang with great vigour ; and in the favourite song in the second act she was twice encored ! This double encore afterwards became fashionable with regard to the singers, particularly at the English theatres. The accomplished singer in question performed, on the 26th of the same month, Dido in Paesiello’s fine opera of that name. In this representation she received as much applause for her acting as for her expressive singing.

On the 21st of April Catalini produced, for her first benefit, Nasolini’s serious opera of ‘ *Le Feste di Iside*.’ In this opera she appeared in male attire, as ‘ *Sesostris, king of Egypt*.’ She never

sang with more effect than in the air ‘*Tiranno mare*,’ in the last act, which afforded a rare treat to the audience. The receipts of the house, which exceeded on this occasion one thousand pounds, afforded a treat also to Catalani herself. Her second benefit took place on the 25th of June, when, in ‘*Il fanatico per la musica*,’ she introduced, for the first time, the popular English air, ‘*Hope told a flattering tale*,’ which was loudly encored. This air was composed upwards of thirty years before, expressly for Madame Mara, by Mazzinghi. Though the style of singing this air by these two great singers was quite opposite ; yet, through the playful embellishments of Catalani, and the refined taste of Mara, they both arrived at the point of perfection ; and if, in the words of our great poet Dryden, one “*Raised a mortal to the skies*,” the other “*Drew an angel down*.”

The custom of encoring singers is one of long standing, and originated, perhaps, more from self-love in the audience than gratitude to those who have afforded them pleasure. It has, however, done much service, by exciting emulation, and thereby stimulating singers to extraordinary exertion. For more than a century has this prerogative of the public been exercised ; and though in many instances it destroys the illusion of the scene, it had become so fixed, that in spite even

of the burlesque of encoring Lord Grizzle's dying song, in Fielding's 'Tom Thumb,' it continued to prevail as much as ever. It is rather curious, by the by, that in calling for a repetition, the audiences of the French and English theatres should each have selected a word forming no part of their respective languages, the former making use of the Latin word *bis*, and the latter the French word *encore*. At the commencement of this season (1808) double encores first occurred, Madame Catalani having been compelled to sing one of her songs in the Italian comic opera 'La Freschetana,' three times! As none of the great singers who had preceded her, Mara, Banti, Grassini, and Billington, had ever received a similar compliment, this appeared extraordinary, till the fact came out, that Catalani, as a part of her engagement for that season, had stipulated to have the privilege of fifty orders nightly! These double encores, however, soon died away at the King's Theatre; but they were a few years afterwards resuscitated by Braham, at Covent Garden Theatre, who in the pollaca, in the opera of the 'Cabinet,' notwithstanding that his vocal powers were considerably diminished, for the first time obtained that high distinction. Sinclair, who subsequently came from that hot-bed of music, Italy, (not unaccompanied by his northern dialect,) .

was in the same opera similarly honoured. The last-mentioned performer, before he went to the land of song and maccaroni, was satisfied with a single encore, and was extremely anxious to obtain that especial mark of favour from the public, as the following fact will show. About the year 1815, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, on getting up the celebrated opera of 'The Duenna,' and giving Sinclair the character of Carlos, he, after having played it two or three nights, not considering the applause commensurate with his abilities, went to Mr. Fawcett, then stage-manager of the theatre, to request he would cut out the obligato cadenza, which I had, time out of mind, played on the oboe, in the symphony of his song in that opera, 'Had I heart for falsehood framed,' and which had been composed for it by Mr. Linley, when that opera was originally brought out in the year 1775. Mr. Fawcett, with great delicacy, told Sinclair that he could not cut the cadenza out; but that he should apply to Mr. Parke, who would accommodate him if he thought proper. Sinclair then came to lay his case before me, complaining that the great applause my cadenza obtained stopped the encore of his song! Though I thought this a mean and silly application, I complied with it, and never interfered with his encores afterwards. It should not remain unnoticed,

that with some managers the encores of a singer go far towards securing a re-engagement, which may in some measure account for Sinclair's anxiety to obtain them. At Vauxhall Gardens, some years ago, in order to enable the manager (who was not a musical luminary) to form a correct judgment of the merits of his different singers, a person was appointed to commit to paper the number of encores elicited by each of them during the season ; at the expiration of which, those who had obtained the greatest number were engaged for the following one. This wise system, however, was at length found not to work well ; for the inferior vocalists, not having the fear of lost reputation before their eyes, took care by circulating their orders amongst their friends, to carry away the palm ; by which means it frequently happened that they, to the depreciation of the concern, obtained the preference. As regards the instances alluded to of double encores, without presuming to insinuate that the new system was surreptitiously introduced into our English theatres, I may be permitted to observe, after forty years' experience in theatrical tactics, that it would not be difficult, through a judicious distribution of determined forcers in various parts of a theatre, with Herculean hands and stentorian voices, to achieve that enviable distinction.

Nothing new occurred at the oratorios this season at Covent Garden Theatre. I may however add, without impropriety, that Mrs. Dickons and Mr. Braham sang admirably ; but that, it will be allowed, is nothing new.

Concerts abounded this season ; for besides that of ancient music, and the vocal concert, Mrs. Billington, Naldi, and Braham, gave six by subscription at Willis's Rooms, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales. The first took place on the 13th of May ; but notwithstanding the powerful and united talents of the three proprietors of them, the audience proved more fashionable than numerous. Salomon, the violin player, also ventured to give four concerts, by subscription, in Hanover Square ; the first took place on the 28th of April. The singers were Catalani and Signori Siboni and Naldi. That these concerts were not well attended was rather surprising, as Salomon's connexions were extensive, and he devoted a great portion of his time to what are termed bread-and-butter parties. This requires explanation. Bread-and-butter parties are those to which professors of talent are invited to dinner, or to a supper, where a little music is given in a friendly way in the evening. These parties gave birth to benefit concerts ; for as the professors so invited could not satisfy their own butchers and bakers

by such engagements, they hit on the expedient of taking annual benefits, to afford their exalted friends an opportunity of returning the favour by taking tickets. But some of the profession opposed that system, as the following anecdote will prove: When Fischer, the celebrated oboe player, who was remarkable for the oddity of his manner, played concertos at the grand concerts given fifty years ago at the Rotunda in Dublin, a noble lord who had been enraptured with the rare talent he displayed, came up to him, and after having complimented him, gave him a pressing invitation to sup with him the following evening; adding, “ You’ll bring your oboe with you ! ” Fischer, who was a little nettled at that sort of invitation, hastily replied, “ My Lord, my oboe never sups ! ”

The only musical novelty at the national theatres was a new opera, in four acts, produced at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 11th of February, called ‘ Kaïs, or Love in the Deserts.’ The music was composed by Bishop. From the merit of the compositions, and the admirable singing of Signora Storace and Braham, it went off with applause.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 6th of June, with a gala in honour of his Majesty’s birthday. The concert was well performed, and the songs were much applauded, particularly

that sung by Mr. Gibbon, ‘She’s down in the village,’ composed by me, which was loudly encored.

The popular musical play of ‘Pizarro’ was represented at Covent Garden Theatre on the 20th of September. Soon after four o’clock on the following morning it was discovered that that theatre was on fire, and though the alarm was instantly given by the watchman, such was the rapidity and violence of the flames, that it was (together with nearly the whole of the west side of Bow Street, Covent Garden) in a few hours reduced to a heap of smoking ruins. This unfortunate accident, by which so much property and so many lives were lost, suspended the performances but for a short time, as the enterprising proprietor, Mr. Harris, made such prompt arrangements, as to be able to resume them at the King’s Theatre on the 26th of the same month, when the ‘Beggar’s Opera’ was represented. The fine voices of Incledon and Mrs. Dickons were heard to great advantage in that noble and finely constructed theatre. On the same evening (September 26th) a new opera, called ‘The Siege of St. Quintin,’ was brought out at Drury Lane Theatre. The whole of the music of this piece, composed by Hook, is replete with science and pleasing melody. Hook, who said many good

things, and could even laugh at his own infirmities, laboured under a great personal defect, owing to his being what is vulgarly called club-footed. But his feet had, by early surgical operations, been so much improved, that he could walk in a limping manner tolerably well. One foot, however, in appearance, was much better than the other, though bad was the best. As a proof of Hook's good-humour, I shall give a story of his having won a wager, which he related to me in the following manner:—" Being one evening with a party of particular friends, and the conversation turning on pretty feet, it was agreed that each one present, male and female, should put one forward, to ascertain who had the handsomest. When it came to my turn, of course I put my *best* foot forth, which creating a general laugh, I said to the gentlemen present, ' Notwithstanding your mirth, I'll bet any one of you five pounds that there's a *worse* foot in company than this ;' and the bet being instantly accepted, I produced my other foot, and won the wager." Hook, however, preferred making an observation to listening to one. News having arrived in London of some great exploit achieved by one of Bonaparte's generals, Marshal Ney, I found him one evening at Vauxhall Gardens, before the concert commenced, standing in the midst of several of his musical

friends relating the particulars of the affair. On his frequently repeating the name of the hero with great energy, I at length jocosely asked him if Marshal Neigh (Ney) was a general of horse ; which so disconcerted him, that he immediately retired to another spot to finish his narration.

James Hook, though an excellent composer, and the author of many very popular songs, &c. was considered to be a plagiarist, which, according to Mr. Puff, in Sheridan's 'Critic,' is no crime, because "two men may happen to hit on the same thought." Be this as it may, he had acquired the character of purloining from others ; which admitting, I consider it to have been the effect of haste, not design. But in music, as in morality, if a man has been once convicted of theft, he can never afterwards efface the stigma. His transgressions, however, being venial, should not be visited with hypercritical severity. How trifling then will appear the imputations against Hook when contrasted with those of Mr. P——, a celebrated contemporary of his, whose oratorio, in three parts, having been performed at Covent Garden Theatre ; and Charles Bannister, who had been present at it, being asked his opinion of the merits of the music, replied, " If another deluge was to take place, and the music of this oratorio was alone preserved, it would afford to posterity a

specimen of the works of all the different composers who had written before him."

A new and splendid opera, in three acts, by Reynolds, called 'The Exile,' was produced at the King's Theatre, by the Covent Garden Company, on the 10th of November. The whole of the music was composed by Mazzinghi. Among the favourite pieces were the bravura and 'Once on a time a pert young ape,' sung by Mrs. Dickons; the latter of which was encored. Incledon's song in the first act, and Fawcett's admirable comic song 'Says Lobsky to his ugly wife,' the latter of which was repeated amidst tumultuous applause. This song was written by G. Colman, Esq.—"The music of the airs," says a critic, "were greatly admired, and the overture (in which the oboe of W. T. Parke was eminently conspicuous in a solo and brilliant cadenza) is a masterly composition." One night during the run of this opera Mr. Shield, the composer, Mr. Incledon, the admired singer, and I, agreed to go after it was ended to the Orange Coffee House, on the opposite side of the street, to take a Welch rabbit for supper. We entered the coffee-room at half-past eleven, and retired from it at half-past twelve o'clock; and although this was reckoned the most reasonable coffee-house in London, our bills amounted to one pound eleven shillings, notwith-

standing we ate nothing but toasted cheese !
They were as follows :—

Mr. Shield,	Welch Rabbit	-	0	1	0	
Ditto,	Two glasses of Brandy and Water	-	-	0	2	0
Mr. Parke,	Welch Rabbit	-	0	1	0	
Ditto,	Two glasses of Brandy and Water	-	-	0	2	0
Mr. Incledon,	Welch Rabbit	-	0	1	0	
Ditto,	Two bottles of Madeira	1	4	0		
			£	1	11	0

Deducting, therefore, from the gross amount twenty-five shillings for Incledon's Welch rabbit, &c., it cost him rather more than eight times the sum we paid for our share. Incledon, who was fond of wine, entertained the erroneous idea, that by diluting it with water, the effect of it became neutralised; not being aware, perhaps, that the aqueous part soon flies off, leaving the vinous in full operation. Incledon having on that occasion washed down one Welch rabbit with four quarts of wine and water, reminds me of the observation of the Prince of Wales in Henry the Fourth, on Falstaff's tavern bill, “ But one pennyworth of bread to that enormous quantity of sack !”

The usual time for opening the King's Theatre being fast approaching, the Covent Garden company removed to Colman's Haymarket Theatre, on the 10th of December, where they performed to the end of the season, during which the above-mentioned new opera proved eminently attractive.

While I was a member of the orchestra at the Drury Lane Theatre, thirty years ago, a curious specimen of new reading occurred there. During the first rehearsal of a new afterpiece, in which the actors, as usual, read their parts, a performer named Lamash, (who was no Solon) in a scene with the admirable comedian Parsons, having in consequence of some knavery discovering itself in the part of the latter, to say aside with surprise, “*Here's a dog for you!*” read it in the following erudite manner: “*Here's a dog for you!*” on which Parsons, almost overcome with laughter, said, “*Where is he? where is he, Lamash?*” Although this took place so many years back, there have not been wanting instances on the stage in later times of similar misconceptions, amongst which is the following: In Reynolds' favourite opera, ‘*The Exile*,’ a performer who acted the character of ——, having the following words to speak: “*His uncle, governor of this vast province,*” invariably spoke it thus: “*His uncle governor, of this vast province,*” &c. Although a travestied

justification of the latter error might be attempted, by bringing forward, as a precedent, Darby's mode of reading the letter containing the challenge of Monsieur Bagatelle, in the 'Poor Soldier,' "I'll tell you what though," it is, notwithstanding, less excusable than the former, not only owing to the march of intellect, but also the consideration, that the latter gentleman had for emolument practised, on high terms, as a teacher of elocution ! It reminds me of a Mr. Benser, a German music-master, whom I formerly knew, who taught singing although he had a locked jaw !

The King's Theatre, which opened on the 6th of January, had not this season the powerful aid of Catalani, who had seceded on account of disagreement as to terms. Comic operas were therefore chiefly performed ; in the first of which, 'La capriziosa pentita,' Signora Collini appeared for the first time in England. Her person was elegant, her countenance pleasing, and her voice (a contr' alto) was sweet and flexible. She was well supported by Naldi and Morelli, and was flatteringly received. From there being no *prima donna* for serious parts, the frequenters of the theatre were dissatisfied, and the attendance was not so numerous as heretofore. The manager, therefore, rather than accede to Catalani's exorbitant terms, engaged several new performers ; among whom were, Signora Griglietti, a pleasing

young singer, Signor Pedrazzi, who had little voice, and Signora Bussani, (from the opera at Lisbon,) who had plenty of it, but whose person and age were not calculated to fascinate an English audience. This state of things continued till the 21st of June, when Signor Tramezzani and Signora Calderini made their first appearance, in a new serious opera composed by Guiglielmi, called 'Sidagero.' Tramezzani displayed great histrionic powers, and his singing was of the first order. Signora Calderini was not prepossessing, but she sang with skill.

The great composer Haydn died on the 26th of May, 1809. He was chapel-master to his Serene Highness Prince Esterhazy, and was born at Rhorau, in Lower Austria, in the year 1733. His father, who was a wheelwright by trade, played upon the harp without the least knowledge of music. This excited the attention of the son, and gave birth to his passion for music. In his early childhood he used to sing to his father's harp the simple tunes that he was able to play. He was afterwards sent to a small school in the neighbourhood, where he began to learn music regularly; and at length was placed under the tuition of Reuter, chapel-master of the Cathedral at Vienna. Having a voice of great compass, he was received into the choir, where he was taught not only to

sing, but also to play upon the harpsichord and violin.

The progress young Haydn made was so rapid, that before he was well acquainted even with the rudiments of harmony, he composed a great number of symphonies, trios, sonatas, and other pieces, in which the early dawnings of a soaring genius were evident. They wanted indeed that regularity and consistency which a methodical education never fails to bestow; yet there appeared in them a wildness of nature and a luxuriance of fancy, which at once bespoke what he might in aftertimes produce, when that wildness and luxuriance were corrected by attention and study.

At the age of eighteen, on the breaking of his voice, he was dismissed from the cathedral. After this he supported himself during eight years as well as he could by his talents, and began to study both the theory and the practice of his favourite art more seriously than ever. For the former he attended closely to the writings of Mattheson, Heinichen, and others, and for the latter chiefly to the works of Emmanuel Bach. He has been frequently heard to acknowledge that his compositions owe a great part of their merit to the ground-work laid by his study of the compositions of Bach. At length Haydn was introduced to Porpora, and for above five months he

received instructions from him in singing and the composition of vocal music.

In 1759 Hadyn was received into the service of Count Marzin ; from whence, in 1768, he passed to the palace of Prince Esterhazy. His transcendent genius soon enabled him to soar high above all his competitors ; and, as envy seldom fails to pursue merit, the German masters became so jealous of his rising fame, that they entered into a kind of combination in order to decry his compositions. Some went so far as even to write pamphlets against his works, complaining of them as wild, flighty, and trifling, and as tending to introduce new musical doctrines, which till then had been totally unknown in that country. That Haydn displayed some novelties in the *notation* of his writings, must be acknowledged ; but that he invented that mode for the convenience of the orchestral performers is equally well known. The only notice, however, he deigned to take of the scurrility and abuse which was thus heaped upon him, was to publish lessons written in imitation of the several styles of his adversaries. In these their peculiarities were so closely copied, and their extraneous passages so inimitably burlesqued, that they all felt keenly the force of his musical wit, and were silent.

It has often been asserted that the compositions

of Haydn are very unequal ; that some are replete with elegance and scientific knowledge, whilst others are extravagant to excess. In illustration of this circumstance it has been remarked, that many of these pieces were written at the command of Prince Esterhazy, whose ideas of music were highly eccentric. It is said that he often chose the plan on which Haydn was to compose particular symphonies ; some, for instance, he ordered to be adapted for three or four orchestras, situated in different apartments, which were to be heard singly, to respond with each other, and to join together at the will of the prince. The following anecdote, if it be founded in truth, would seem to have some relation to this strange humour of the prince. The musicians of his palace are said to have disagreed with the officers of the household, and to have given in their resignations. These were accepted, under the impression that they would soon change their minds. On the evening of the day they had fixed for their departure they were to perform their last concert before the prince. Haydn had composed for the occasion a symphony, the conclusion of which was of a very extraordinary kind. It was an adagio, in which each instrument in succession played a solo ; and, at the end of each part, Haydn wrote these words : “ Put out your candle, and

go about your business." The first oboe and second French-horn are said to have gone away first; after this the second oboe and the first horn; then the bassoons; and so on with the rest of the performers, except the first and second violins, who were alone left to finish the symphony. The prince was astonished, and asked what the meaning of all this was. Haydn told him that the musicians were about to quit his service, and that carriages were then at the door of the palace waiting to carry them away. The prince sent for those into his presence who had left the room, and reproved them severely for the manner in which they were about to desert so excellent a master. The men, who had previously repented of their imprudent conduct, expressed their regret at what had been done, and were allowed again to enter into his service.

The whimsical symphony before alluded to has been printed, and performed in London. I assisted in it several times at the late professional concert.

✓ The national music of the Germans is by nature rough, bold, and grand; and although they do not possess the softness of the Italians, yet it must be confessed that in instrumental music, and particularly in that for wind instruments, they have excelled all other nations.

The refinement of their music was reserved for Haydn to accomplish ; and this he has done in a very ample manner, by originality, novelty, and beautiful melody, in which he has greatly excelled all his predecessors.

Besides numerous pieces for instruments, Haydn has composed many operas for the Esterhazy Theatre, which were also performed in the theatres of Vienna and Berlin. He has likewise written a good deal of church music, which has established firmly his reputation as a deep contrapuntist. His *Stabat Mater* was first performed at Vienna, and was received with the most flattering testimonies of applause. It has since been performed and printed in England. His oratorio, of ' *Il ritorno di Tobia*, ' composed in 1775 for the benefit of musicians' widows, has been annually performed at Vienna ever since, and is in high favour. The symphonies of this great composer were first introduced into this country about the year 1776, and were immediately adopted at our theatres, concerts, &c. They afforded as much delight to the musicians who performed them, as to the public who listened to them. They combined science and pleasing melody in an extraordinary degree. It would be superfluous to enlarge on the merits of Haydn's compositions, so well known and appreciated in every part of

Europe. Haydn first visited England in the year 1791, being engaged by Salomon for his subscription concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms. He also visited England in 1792, and in 1795. In the latter year I had several times the pleasure of supping with him after the concerts given by the Duke of York and the Prince of Wales, at York and Carlton Houses ; and I thus had opportunities of enjoying his agreeable conversation and of observing his amiable manners. Whilst in this country, Haydn was universally admired, and among other instances of respect shown to his transcendent talents, the University of Oxford conferred on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Music. His oratorio of the Creation was first performed here in the year 1800. The first act of it including the fine chorus ‘ The Heavens are telling,’ is highly effective. In the two succeeding acts there are not any very striking beauties, though science and genius pervade the whole. This oratorio was performed with universal applause in London, and subsequently at every music meeting in the united kingdom ; but for several years past, only the first part has been performed. It was in England that Haydn, by observing the enthusiasm with which the people received the loyal song ‘ God save the King,’ caught the idea of composing his anthem, ‘ Long

live the Emperor,' which, though a more scientific composition than our 'God save the King,' (said to be composed by Harry Carey,) wants its sublimity and pathos. Haydn died at Gumpendorf, at the age of seventy-eight, and was buried there in consequence of Vienna being then in the occupation of the French. Though his mortal remains must suffer decay, his imperishable name will survive whilst musical harmony exists, decorated with never-fading laurels.

The oratorios this season commenced for the first time on the anniversary of King Charles' martyrdom, at the Hay Market Theatre. The 30th of January had hitherto been held so sacred, that no public performance whatever had been permitted. The last season, however, Mr. Ware, the leader of the band at Covent Garden Theatre, ventured to give his benefit concert on that night at the Hay Market Theatre, and it not having been interrupted by the authorities, Mr. Ashley, the proprietor of the oratorios, this season added it to his former number of performances ; and as innovation has seldom any bounds, he afterwards included Whitsun Eve. The singers, with the exception of Signora Griglietti and Mr. Vaughan, were the same as last year. Mrs. Dickons and Mr. Braham took the lead.

In Passion Week I went with two male friends

to make a short tour of the Sussex and Hampshire coasts. We set out for Brighton, where dulness so powerfully prevailed, that we left on the following day, and proceeded to Chichester. The choir of the cathedral here is so narrow that two persons can scarcely pass without jostling each other. From Chichester we proceeded to Portsmouth, that famous rendezvous of the wooden walls of old England. Portsmouth, however, not having pleased us more than Brighton, we left, after eight-and-forty hours' stay there, in a packet-boat to Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, the ancient Vecta, and, previously to our landing, entered into an agreement, that he who made the first pun after we had entered the hotel, should go scot free of expense for the day. As living in the principal hotels on the island is not to be accomplished at a small expense, we were all on the alert, and on some refreshments being brought, the gentleman who had been deputed to act as master of the ceremonies asked me what wine I would take? to which I replied red; and on the question being put to our other friend, he eagerly exclaimed, "I'll a' White," (Isle of Wight) whereby he won his day's expenses. After having explored the precipices and vallies of that epitome of Switzerland, as far as Sand Rock, we dined at the pretty

hotel on the summit of the hill, and then turned off for Newport, where we stayed a short time for refreshment. The landlord of the respectable public-house near the barracks where we alighted, had been a non-commissioned officer in the army, and was said to be an excellent player on the bagpipes : we therefore requested him to oblige us by playing a tune on them ; which he was making slow preparations to do, when my friends, *mal apropos*, soliciting me to play something on the flute, which we carried in the barouche with us, till he was ready, the old soldier, staring with astonishment, instantly packed up his pipes, and could not be prevailed upon to afford us an opportunity of judging of his musical abilities. Having remained two days at the Marine Hotel, West Cowes, a delightful situation, we proceeded in an open boat to Southampton, where we put up at an inn kept by an Irishman of great eccentricity and good-nature. For our dinner we ordered some fish, a dish of veal cutlets, and a woodcock. The latter, to our surprise, when placed on the table appeared without a head ; and on the landlord being asked how he came to serve up a woodcock without his bill, he replied, “ Oh, never mind that ; you ate the woodcock, and never fear, I’ll take care of the *bill!*” The follow-

ing morning we departed in the stage-coach, from that mart of port and prawns, and arrived in London in the evening.

The concerts of Billington, Naldi, and Braham, commenced at Willis's Rooms on the 1st of March. This vocal triumvirate, consisting of a Protestant, a Roman Catholic, and a Jew, properly despising religious distinctions, harmonised together, as Falstaff says, “like sack and sugar.” In addition to their own talents, they called in the multitudinous aid of Signora Collini, Mrs. Bianchi, Miss Parke, Signor Morelli, Signor Siboni, and others of equal note, to the number of sixteen. This phalanx of singers was not only formidable in numbers, but in talent also ; and the extent of the subscription proved that it was irresistible. The concert of ancient music, and the vocal concert, were given as usual at Hanover Square. Madame Catalani, who was not engaged at the opera, gave six concerts by subscription at Hanover Square, commencing on the 26th of March ; in announcing which, she held out as an alarm to the manager of the opera, and as an excitement to subscribers, that she was on the point of proceeding to the continent. This *ruse* had the effect both ways ; for she was engaged for the ensuing season at the opera, and her concerts were well attended. She sang each night in excellent style. The band was

led by Mr. Yaniewicz, who played violin concertos of his own in a finished and masterly manner.

At Drury Lane Theatre, a new opera, called 'The Circassian Bride,' was produced on Thursday, the 23rd of February. The music, by Mr. Bishop, is in many parts original and pleasing, particularly the quintet in the second act, and a duet between Braham and Miss Lyon, afterwards Mrs. Bishop. On the following night, Friday, the 24th of February, about eleven o'clock, an alarm was given by the drums and bugle-horns of the volunteers, announcing the dreadful fire which had just broken out at Drury Lane Theatre. Mr. Shield was supping with me at my house in Long Acre, at the time; and though we proceeded immediately to the centre of Covent Garden Market, the progress of the raging element had been so great, that the whole of the building presented to the view one vast body of flame. This misfortune, which happened within a little more than five months of the burning of Covent Garden Theatre, was not attended with loss of life, as it occurred on an oratorio night, when there was no performance. A considerable time having elapsed before the Drury Lane proprietor fixed on a place in which to resume the regular performances, he gave a few plays at the King's Theatre, on the nights when there were no operas, and on the 12th.

of April he opened for the remaining part of the season at the Lyceum Theatre in the Strand.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season with a grand gala, in honour of his Majesty's birthday, on the 4th of June. In the concert Miss Feron, a very promising young singer, sang a new song of my composition, with an obligato accompaniment for the flute, called 'The nightingale,' with great sweetness; she was much applauded. Mr. Brooks, leader of the band, performed a concerto on the violin with taste and neatness.

The new Theatre Royal Covent Garden was now fast approaching towards completion, and the external part being in a forward state, the curiosity of the public to view it was so intense, that Bow Street was become a fashionable promenade, and gave birth to many whimsical observations, of which the following is a specimen: on passing through that street one morning, I joined some friends, one of whom was the lively Captain B—w. They were admiring the lofty fluted pillars, which had just been put up at the box door. One of the party, who was much struck with their magnitude, asked the captain if he knew to what order of architecture they belonged? "Faith," said he good-humouredly, "I cannot exactly tell; but as they are placed at the grand entrance, I presume they are of Door-ic" (Doric). This

superb theatre, which, as Mr. Harris told me, cost two hundred thousand pounds, opened on the 18th of September. I must here premise, that, for some time previous to its opening, a great ferment had been excited in the public mind, first, by the proprietor's having engaged Madame Catalani and others, for Italian operas; which engagements, in accordance with the public wish, were afterwards set aside; secondly, from his having built an entire upper tier of private boxes, for the accommodation of the aristocracy, to the exclusion of the public; and thirdly, by his having raised the prices of admission. On the first night, as soon as the curtain rose, a deafening clamour burst forth from all parts of the house, which continued the whole evening till the curtain fell, with such violence, that nothing could be heard but the calls of "No Catalani!" "No private boxes!" and "O. P." meaning old prices. This "O. P. row," as it has been termed, became more formidable on the succeeding nights, and afforded ample employment to the magistrates at Bow Street. During this contest a whimsical occurrence took place behind the scenes. George Cooke, the popular actor of that day, who was frequently inebriated whilst performing, and to whose talent J. Kemble had secretly as great an aversion as a rabid dog has to water, being at a rehearsal,

was accosted by J. Kemble, then stage-manager, in the following manner: " Cooke, you were very drunk last night. If I was you, I would avoid it when going on the stage.—You should time it,—you should time it, as I do." Two or three nights after having given this friendly advice, J. Kemble, who had been drowning his cares, came behind the scenes, when the " row" was at its height, and staggering on the stage, attempted to pacify the audience ; but the reception he met was so outrageous, that he retreated straight—I mean, as fast as he could. Cooke, who had witnessed this, seeing Kemble the next morning in the green-room, said to him, with great solemnity, " Kemble, you were very drunk last night. If I was you, I would avoid it when going on the stage.—You should time it,—you should time it, as I do." This " row" continued with more or less violence till the 14th of December, a period of nearly three months, when the managers at length crying *peccavi*, the public, through their committee, dictated terms of reconciliation ; which being instantly agreed to by the managers, the stream of public favour again flowed through its former channels. This termination of the memorable contest confirmed the rule laid down by Pope, " The drama's patrons are the drama's laws."

Soon after George Cooke, the popular actor, came to Covent Garden Theatre Shakspeare's play of 'The Tempest' was revived there with great splendour, in which John Kemble performed the character of 'Prospero.' It was at that time that Kemble had his ridiculous contest with the public respecting his pronunciation of the word *a-ches*. "That Kemble was right," said a judicious writer in 'The Times' journal, "every body who knows English literature will acknowledge; but his folly was to contend against custom, (which is, and always has been the rule of pronunciation,) prevailing for above a century, in all the literary and professional circles." This being in my opinion decisive, nothing remains to be observed but that in this particular J. Kemble proved himself to be an egregious coxcomb; for whether a man seeks to differ from the rational parts of society, by a singularity of dress or of mind, he is equally intitled to the appellation. Kemble, however, experienced a merited punishment for his presumption, by being repeatedly hissed off the stage. He consoled himself perhaps under this castigation, by the conviction, that although, for the sake of being particular, he chose to adopt the ancient and exploded pronunciation of the word *a-ches*; yet, as none of the literati could say that he was absolutely wrong, it

answered his purpose, by increasing (as he thought) his notoriety, keeping in mind the words of the poet,—

And fame not more survives
From good, than evil deeds.

After this play (with Johnson's alterations) had been performed several times, Kemble being taken ill, Mr. Harris, the proprietor of the theatre, not wishing the run of the play to be interrupted, requested Cooke to perform the character of 'Prospero ;' to which he assented. Cooke, at the rehearsal of the play, being asked by one of his brethren if he intended to pronounce the word after the obnoxious manner of Kemble, replied,— "No, no; I hate to be particular." When the scene however came on, Cooke, whose mind was wholly absorbed by the unpopular word, in order to avoid "being particular," omitted the whole of the line which contained it, making at the same time a hurried exit amidst his own confusion and the indulgent mirth of the audience.

Cooke, whose love of liquor was such, that in a reasonable time he would have drained the great tun of Heidelberg of its contents, drank one morning, during the rehearsal of the play of 'The Merchant of Venice,' eleven tumblers of brandy and water; consequently, with the effect

of that and what he afterwards took at his dinner, he was in a state of inebriety when the play commenced in the evening. As soon as Cooke appeared on the stage as Shylock, (for the first time,) the audience perceiving the state he was in, began to hiss in spite of his popularity. Cooke, on attempting to walk to the front of the stage to address them, increased their violence, and he said, in an under-tone,—“ Damn you, ye black-guards, what do ye want?” This elegant address, fortunately for him, was not heard by the public, although I and others in the orchestra heard it distinctly. The performance, however, proceeded. Cooke was watched to prevent his receiving more liquor during its progress, and what he had taken having by degrees evaporated, he displayed such extraordinary powers in the trial scene of the fourth act as drew forth enthusiastic bursts of applause. If Cooke, as it was said, could play himself sober, he could also play himself drunk ; for I have seen him at the beginning of a play perfectly himself, and in the last act so completely intoxicated, with what he had taken in his dressing-room, as to be unable, as the actors have it, even to *walk* through his part !

“ If,” as Congreve says, “ wine draws forth a man’s natural qualities,” Cooke must have possessed a vindictive disposition, as the follow-

ing fact will show: dining with two of his most intimate friends at the Garrick's Head Coffee-house, in Bow Street, Covent Garden, Cooke, who could not bear contradiction, being foiled in an argument by Mr. S. Taylor, the well-known flutist, and having in consequence vented a large portion of scurrility upon his opponent, left the room, and returning shortly afterwards with an officer of the police, actually gave his friend into custody on a charge of having stolen his pocket-book! The whole party went immediately before the magistrate who was then sitting, and it being proposed during the investigation that each of them should be searched, the book was at length found in a private pocket in the inside of Cooke's coat!

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 12th of December with a new comic opera, called 'Scomessa.' Tramezzani, who was this season engaged for the comic as well as the serious opera, acquitted himself in his new line much to the satisfaction of the public. Signora Collini, having risen high in the estimation of the audience, was much applauded, as was Signor Naldi. The music of this opera was composed by Guiglielmi. The operatic company was very imperfect, there being no *prima donna* engaged for serious characters.

1810.

The King's Theatre proceeded without a *prima donna* till the 11th of March, when Madame Catalani being re-engaged, made her first appearance for two years in the favourite comic opera ' *Il fanatico per la musica.*' She was on her *entrée* greeted with universal applause. She was in excellent voice, and both she and Naldi performed with great effect. On the 21st of June Catalani presented, for the first time these thirty years, (as she said, although it had been performed for Signora Fabrizzi's benefit, May 5, 1796,) Piccini's comic opera of former days, ' *La buona figluola,*' for her own benefit. She performed the part of ' *La buona figluola*' with great ability, and sang the airs charmingly. At the end of the first act she gave Arne's popular song, ' *The Soldier tir'd,*' and at the end of the opera ' *God save the King;*' the former with great animation and neatness of execution in the divisions, though by no means equal to Billington; and the latter with a profusion of embellishments, vulgarly called flourishes, which totally destroyed the character, and consequently the effect of our national anthem. They were however both loudly encored! The celebrated Lord Chesterfield used to say,—“When I pay my half-guinea at the door of the Italian Opera, I always

leave my senses (seeing and hearing excepted) with it."

Nicola Piccini, the composer of the music of 'La buona figluola,' who was born in 1728, at Bari, in the kingdom of Naples, may be ranked among the most fertile and original composers that the Neapolitan school has ever produced. His father designed him for the church; but an invincible passion for music frustrated this intention. He practised for some time in secret, and was by accident discovered to have made considerable progress in the art before his father was prevailed upon to let him have a master.

In 1742 he was placed in the Conservatory of San Onofrio, under the direction of Leo, and after his death under Durante. Piccini spent twelve years in study before he quitted the Conservatory: he then began his professional career at the Florentine Theatre in Naples, with a comic opera intitled 'Le donne dispettose.' In 1758 he was invited to Rome, where he composed 'Alessandro nell' Indie.' This opera, besides several airs which are truly excellent, contains one of the finest overtures that ever were composed. Two years afterwards his comic opera of 'La buona figluola' had a success that no previous drama could boast of. It was no sooner heard at Rome than copies were multiplied; and there was

no musical theatre in Europe where this burletta was not frequently performed, in some language or other, during many years. His serious opera, ‘The Olympiad,’ performed in the following winter, was equally successful ; and, for fifteen years, Piccini was considered the first musical composer in Rome. Anfossi was at last unfairly preferred to him. In consequence of this he left Rome in disgust, and returned to Naples. From the latter city he was invited to France, and in December, 1776, he arrived in Paris. Previously to this time, as Sacchini informed Dr. Burney, he had composed at least three hundred operas, of which, in one instance, thirteen had been produced in the short space of seven months. When Piccini arrived in France he knew not a word of the French language ; but Marmontel undertook to be his instructor. The latter engaged to make, in six operas of Quinalt, the changes which were requisite, in order that they might be set to modern music. For some time he passed every morning with Piccini, explained a scene to him, taught him to repeat it, marked by convenient signs the quantity of each word and syllable, and then left Piccini to work by himself. His task was to set to music what he had learnt ; and on the following morning he sang it to Marmontel. If there happened to be any incorrectness in regard

to the expression or quantity of the language, they immediately went to work together in order to perfect it. This kind of labour they continued steadily to pursue for almost twelve months.

Before Piccini had completed his first work in France he found himself opposed by a most formidable rival in Gluck, who, about this time, effected a great revolution in French music. He had introduced into it the forms of recitative and song from the Italian school, whilst from the German school he had brought grandeur and strength of harmony. A musical war was excited, which for a while divided and exasperated all Paris. Whilst this war was at its height Berton, the director of the opera, made an attempt to put an end to it by reconciling the two chiefs. He gave a splendid supper, at which Piccini and Gluck, after embracing each other, sat down together, and conversed with the greatest cordiality during the whole evening. They parted good friends; but the war went on with as much fury betwixt their respective partisans as ever. The opera of 'Roland' was the first which was produced by Piccini in Paris: it was followed by 'Atys' and by 'Iphigénie en Tauride:' the whole of which received general admiration from all excepting those who were devoted to the cause of his opponent.

When, in the year 1781, Sacchini came to Paris, an opera was required from each of these masters for the entertainment of that year at Fontainebleau. Piccini chose the story of 'Dido,' and Sacchini that of 'Chimena.' Sacchini was first ready, and his piece was put in rehearsal without delay. Every prejudice was in its favour: the orchestra, the actors, and the managers of the opera, with one accord extolled him to the skies. When the poetry of 'Dido' was finished Piccini went to the country residence of Marmontel, who had written it, and continued there for seventeen days, till he had composed the whole of the music. In six weeks it was completely ready for performance; and such was the success of this charming piece, as to eclipse all rivalry.

Piccini possessed an astonishing versatility of genius. Whilst 'Dido,' at the Opera House, excited the most powerful emotions of sympathy and grief, his other operas of the 'Pretended Lord,' and 'The Sleeper Awakened,' gave birth to emotions that were perfectly opposite.

At the breaking out of the French Revolution Piccini, having lost his pensions, returned to Naples. The Neapolitan minister had the cruelty to forbid his appearing in public; in consequence of which he remained almost constantly shut up in his chamber in solitude and indigence. During

this time he amused himself with setting to music several of the Italian psalms of Saverio Mattei.

In the year 1799 he returned to Paris, where he solicited from Bonaparte the renewal of his pensions. He was favourably received, and munificently recompensed for composing a march for the consular guard at the express command of the First Consul.

Not long afterwards he was appointed to an inspector's place in the National Conservatory of Music. This situation he held till the time of his death, which occurred on the 7th of May, 1801, at the age of seventy-two.

Catalani, who was this season engaged at the Covent Garden Theatre oratorios, appeared at their commencement, on the 10th of March, in a grand selection. Her voice resounded in that new and superb theatre, and in 'Angels ever bright and fair,' and a bravura by Pucita, she received unbounded applause.

The concert of ancient music began at the Hanover Square Rooms on the 21st of February, and the vocal concert at the same rooms on the 2d of March. Mrs. Billington, who was engaged for the latter, being taken ill, Madame Catalani volunteered to sing in her place, and in a scena by Pucita, and a rondo by Zingarelli, she was loudly applauded. Harrison, Bartleman, and Mrs. Bian-

chi contributed highly to the gratification of the subscribers. The concerts of Billington, Naldi, and Braham, after being twice postponed, commenced at Willis's Rooms on the 10th of May. The singers this year were only five, (eleven less than the preceding season,) viz. Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Ashe, Miss Mortimer, Naldi, and Braham. The subscriptions to these concerts (as the postponements seemed to proclaim) came in but slowly; and not being by any means commensurate with the superiority and expense of the undertaking, they were after that season discontinued. Braham, who was not engaged at the opera, or either of the winter theatres, did not by this speculation make his coffers overflow; an object which he prudently seizes every occasion to effect. That ruling passion, gain, which so particularly sways persons of his persuasion, is so strongly implanted in their natures, that it may sometimes be discovered in their children, even while infants, as the following relation will show:—A gentleman, who was in the habit of visiting at the house of that admired singer, informed me (as an admirable trait in a child then only five years old) that he one day asked Braham's little boy to sing him a song, which the infant said he would do if he paid him for it. “Well, my little dear,” said the gentleman,

“ how much do you ask for one ? ”—“ Sixpence,” replied the child. “ Oh,” said the other, “ can’t you sing me one for less ? ”—“ No,” said the urchin, “ I can’t take less for one ; but I’ll sing you three for a shilling ! ”

Venanzio Rauzzini, the conductor of the concerts at Bath, died on the 8th of April, at Bath, where he had resided many years. He was a native of Rome. The first rudiments of his musical education were acquired in one of the conservatori, or music schools, of that city. Before he quitted Rome, which was at an early age, he was so well practised in singing, and had so thorough a knowledge of music, that he could take up the most difficult instrumental composition, reverse the page as he held it before him, and in that position sing it at sight with perfect correctness.

Having exhibited his powers of singing with much success in his native city, he determined to travel into different countries, for the purpose of extending his fame and improving his skill. Vienna seems to have been the first city at which he resided for any length of time after leaving Rome. There he was justly considered the first singer of his day, and consequently became the delight and idol of the public, and the envy of his rivals.

The enthusiasm of the people in his favor is sufficiently evinced by the following anecdote :

At the opera in Vienna it is contrary to the decorum of the place, and to the order of the court, for persons in the pit to give, in the presence of the Emperor, loud and vociferous applause to a performer ; but on the first night of Rauzzini's appearance, when he had concluded a song in which his full powers had been displayed, the whole audience joined in an universal cry of *bravo*. The court was offended at so great an indecency. Placards were affixed in the avenues of the theatre, and in conspicuous parts of the house, reproving the impropriety of these proceedings, and strictly enjoining their discontinuance ; and, in order to enforce obedience to the imperial commands, additional guards were placed in the pit. Rauzzini appeared a second time, and notwithstanding every obstacle, was again applauded by the whole house.

In 1774 Rauzzini came to England, and was engaged to sing at the opera. His fame soon spread over the metropolis ; and Garrick was so much delighted with his performance of Montezuma, in the opera of that name, that he ran behind the scenes and embraced him with a degree of enthusiasm that astonished all the by-standers.

The success of his theatrical performances, although very great and flattering, was not sufficient inducement for him to continue on the stage. He soon quitted it and retired to Bath, where he formed a connexion with that surprising violin player, La Motte, who on his instrument executed double notes with as much neatness and celerity as others did single ones. La Motte, however, finding it inconvenient to remain in Bath, Rauzzini from that period continued to conduct the concerts, with the greatest credit to himself, and the most perfect satisfaction to the subscribers.

As a scientific musician, Rauzzini has ranked among the first in this country. He composed several Italian operas, both serious and comic, and in these are to be found pleasing and expressive melodies, and elegant and powerful harmony. His facility in composition was very remarkable.

The opera of 'Piramo e Tisbeo,' for the King's Theatre, he produced in the short space of three weeks, and in this opera he himself played the part of Pyramus in an admirable manner. His other most celebrated operas are, 'L' Ali d' Amore,' — 'L' Eroe Chinese,' — 'Creusa in Delfo,' — 'La Regina di Golconda,' and 'La Vestale.' In private life few men were more esteemed, none more generally beloved. A mild and cheerful dispo-

sition, and a copious fund of information, rendered him an attractive and agreeable companion. Rauzzini has been accused by at least one writer with having, by his love of company, involved himself in difficulties. This accusation is I think unjust, for Rauzzini was compelled by circumstances to entertain a number of popular singers and musicians, who came to Bath to serve him, and for which they received little, or perhaps no other remuneration. Indeed no man less respected than Rauzzini was, could have carried on these concerts, and have produced at them as he did, a succession of singers of the first eminence, at a subscription amounting to no more than about two shillings and ninepence per night ! being less than a third of those at the concerts in London. About the year 1800, Rauzzini, finding that he had long been playing a losing game, made an effort to get a small increase on the subscription ; but the subscribers being averse to innovations of that kind, opposed him with such determination that he was forced to abandon his enterprise altogether.

The city of Bath formerly teemed with musical excellence, and many striking compositions were given to the public by several of its distinguished residents, among whom may be noticed the Earl of Mornington, who composed the beautiful glee,

‘Here in cool grot ;’ Dr. Harrington, celebrated for his large wig and the favourite duet, ‘How sweet in the woodlands ;’ and Mr. Linley, not only famous for his admired musical compositions, but as the father of Miss Linley, (afterwards Mrs. Sheridan,) the most accomplished singer in Europe. Miss Linley, (the Maid of Bath,) equally famed for her beauty as for her singing, was addressed by two equally honourable lovers, Mr. Sheridan and Captain Mathews, whose passions were so ardent, that in consequence of some altercation concerning the lady, they agreed to terminate their difference by the sword. They met for that purpose, and fought till they were so exhausted that they both fell, and while lying on the ground continued making thrusts at each other until they were separated. The lady, however, gave the preference to Mr. Sheridan, to whom she was united in the year 1773. Mr. Ashe, the well-known flutist, now the proprietor of the Bath concerts, by combining gentlemanly manners with professional skill, is eminently qualified to be the successor of Rauzzini.

The concert of ancient music and the vocal concert were the only ones given this season, with the exception of Billington, Naldi, and Braham’s. The two former were numerously and fashionably

attended, as were the oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre.

Music not being the prevailing feature at the winter theatres this season, the only opera produced was by the Drury Lane company (their theatre having been burnt down), at the Lyceum, on the 15th of March, called 'The Maniac, or the Swiss Banditti,' written by Mr. Arnold. The music of this piece, by Bishop, in many parts was very effective, and deserved great praise.

Incledon, the celebrated vocalist, was a singular compound of contrarieties, amongst which frugality and extravagance were conspicuous. Mr. Shield the composer, Incledon, and I, lived for many years a good deal together. On one occasion Shield and myself dined with Incledon at his house at Brompton in the month of February. When I had arrived there, Incledon said to me, "Bill, do you like ducks?" Conceiving, from the snow lying on the ground, that he meant wild ones, I replied, "Yes, I like a good wild duck very well."—"Damn wild ducks!" said he, "I mean tame ducks, my boy:" adding, "I bought a couple in town, which we shall have for dinner, for which I gave eighteen shillings!" Soon afterwards a letter arrived, announcing that Mr. Raymond, the stage-manager of Drury Lane Theatre,

who was to have been of the party, could not come ; in consequence of which, I presume, only one duck was placed on the dinner-table, with some roast beef, &c. When Mrs. Incledon (who, as well as her husband, was fond of good living) had carved the duck, like a good wife, she helped her husband to the breast part and one of the wings, taking at the same time the other wing to herself, reserving for Shield and me the two legs and the back. Shield, who looked a little awkward at this specimen of selfishness and ill-manners, at first refused the limb offered to him, and as I had declined taking the other, there appeared to be but a poor prospect of the legs walking off, till Shield relented and took one, and Incledon the other, so that they were speedily out of sight. The back however remained behind, and afforded a titbit for the servants. Whatever deficiencies might have prevailed at this party were amply amended at the subsequent one I am about to describe. The company on this occasion consisted of five persons only : Incledon, Shield, myself, Davy (the composer), and Dr. Mosely, physician to Chelsea Hospital. The dinner was excellent, the dessert handsome, and, in addition to the usual wines, there was abundance of pink and white champagne. After the cloth was removed Incledon, Shield, and I, sang as the Latin

grace, ‘*Non nobis Domine*,’ and some time afterwards, Giardini’s Italian convivial glee, ‘*Bevi amo tutti tre*,’ which, with several of Incledon’s best songs, formed a musical treat. Chelsea Hospital at length becoming the subject of conversation, Incledon said to Dr. Mosely—“I suppose, doctor, the poor old Chelsea pensioners don’t care a rush about dying?”—“You are quite in error, I assure you,” replied the doctor, “it was from possessing the proper feelings of men that they were excited to that degree of heroism through which they so valiantly defended their king and country; and though British soldiers have not time for reflection on the field of battle, they are afterwards as sensible of their imperfections as are others. In my daily visits to the pensioners I have an opportunity of witnessing the gratitude of the convalescent, the hope depicted in the countenances of some not quite despaired of, and the resignation of those verging on the brink of eternity—men who, though they had been lions in fight, were lambs when their hard duties were ended.” The doctor’s feeling description of our former brave defenders excited a pleasing melancholy, and perhaps occasioned us to sing the serious glee, ‘*Peace to the souls of heroes*,’ with more than usual effect; which being our finale, we separated soon after.

A grand fête, in compliment to the Persian am-

bassador, was given at the Vauxhall Gardens on the 11th of June. The illuminations, which were truly superb, and the concert, afforded his Excellency much gratification. Miss Feron sang a new comic song, (composed by me,) called 'The Romp, or the Great Catalani,' in which she gave an imitation of that great singer in one of her most popular songs, with such effect as to call forth a universal encore.

The Drury Lane company opened for the season at the Lyceum, on the 18th of September, with the comic opera of 'The Cabinet,' in which Mr. Phillips, in the part of Orlando, was much applauded. The voice of Mr. Phillips, though not powerful, is a tenor of good quality, and of considerable flexibility. He sang the airs with taste, but it was too close a copy of Braham throughout. Imitations of a servile kind are not gratifying, as imitators invariably fasten on the peculiarities or defects, of which we wish the originals to be divested. It has been said that the arts have their origin in imitation, but it is not that sort of imitation before described. A youth cultivating music will doubtless, in the first instance, make his tutor his model; but after a certain portion of time devoted to study has elapsed, and he listens to a variety of performers of superior excellence, he, similarly to the bee, extracts a sweet from every

flower of their imaginations, which being blended with the effusions of his own genius, makes a compound that is unlike any one in particular, though partaking of all, and therefore presents a style which may be justly called original.

In November of this year I composed an Elegy for three voices, on the death of her late Royal Highness the Princess Amelia (which took place on the 2nd of that month). On its publication I sent a copy to Mrs. Billington, from whom I received the following letter:—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I thank you much for the copy of your admirable Elegy on the death of the Princess Amelia. Having some musical friends with me yesterday, I had the pleasure of hearing it, (taking a part in it myself,) and beg to say that it was greatly admired as a scientific and pleasing composition.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ E. BILLINGTON.

“ Fulham Lane, Dec. 8, 1810.

“ *W. T. Parke, Esq.*”

This piece was afterwards sung at the Noblemen’s Catch Club, at the Thatched’ House, at a full meeting of the members, among whom were his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, and

was honoured with the highest approbation. This club was instituted in the year 1762, by the Earl of Eglinton, the Earl of March, (afterwards Duke of Queensberry,) —— Meynell, Esq., &c. The spirit and liberality with which this establishment has been since supported, particularly by the distribution of gold medals, &c. as rewards, have given birth to many new, scientific, and elegant compositions.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on Saturday the 22nd of December, with the serious opera, 'Zaira,' in which Madame Bertinotti Radicati made her first appearance as *prima donna seria*. If her voice did not possess all the power of Billington's or Catalani's, in sweetness it was not inferior to either. She sang with great taste and brilliancy, and was, together with Tramezzani, universally applauded.

1811.

On the 6th of January Madame Bertinotti performed in the serious opera 'Zaira' for the fifth time, with increased effect. Catalani, who was skilled in all the arts of her profession, knowing that the town would not be well filled till the latter part of January, and fearing that her popularity might suffer by performing to thin houses, did not choose to appear till Saturday the 22nd

of January, when she performed in an entire new demi-character opera, called ‘*Le tre Sultane*.’ The music was by Pucita. She was received with general greetings, and her voice and execution were as perfect as ever. Naldi and Signora Collini performed admirably. The music of this opera is light and pleasing. A new serious opera was produced, for the first time, on the 5th of March, called ‘*Phedra*.’ The music, composed by Signor F. Radicati, (husband to Madame Bertinotti,) was generally good, and the finale to the first act, and the duet ‘*Consola quest’ anima*,’ (feelingly sung by Bertinotti and Tramezzani,) are masterly compositions. Catalani produced for her benefit a new opera, called ‘*Climene*;’ in which she, for the first time, sang Rode’s theme and difficult variations with great effect. The one in arpeggios was a surprising effort, and was rapturously and deservedly applauded. ‘*God save the King*’ was called for, and sung twice by Catalani, with as great a profusion of flourishes as ever. It may not be amiss to state, that the female Italian singers do not generally change their names when married, or if they do make any alteration, they merely add the name of their husband to their own.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced with a selection on the 1st of March. Madame Catalani sang ‘*Holy, holy*,’ and ‘*The*

soldier tired,' (in the latter she was encored,) and Mrs. Dickons, 'Sweet bird,' as well as Dr. Boyce's charming duet, 'Together let us range the fields,' with Incledon, which was also repeated.

I dined with a large party of ladies and gentlemen at the villa of Mrs. B——t, in Surrey, on the Saturday in Passion-week. Amongst the company were Dignum, the well-known vocalist, and his daughter, who were both Roman Catholics. Whilst the rest of the party were partaking of a dinner, which consisted of all the delicacies of the season, it was observed that Miss Dignum partook of nothing, though her father was eating with as much appetite as if he had just returned from a fox-chase. Sitting opposite to Dignum, I said to him,—“How comes it that you can enjoy the good things of the table, while your daughter is not permitted to taste of them?”—“O,” said he, smiling, “I have got a dispensation!”—“Why,” added I, “did you not procure for your daughter a similar indulgence to that which you obtained for yourself?”—“Oh, my dear boy,” replied he, “that would never have done, for it would have cost me half a crown!” He died worth thirty thousand pounds.

The inconvenience experienced by the young lady before-mentioned, in consequence of her father's parsimony, brings to my recollection a

similar privation under which the hero of the following almost-forgotten anecdote smarted: Some city tradesmen having agreed to take a dinner together on a fast-day at Clapham, one of them, a Roman Catholic, who did not choose to go to the expense of purchasing a dispensation, had consented to be of the party, on the proviso that he should be allowed to eat only of what he thought proper. When the day had arrived, they sat down to an excellent dinner; and fish forming a part of it, the Romanist ate very heartily. He was not, however, insensible to the blushing charms of a fine Westmoreland ham, which occupied a distinguished place amongst the other dishes on the table; but as he could not without a violation of conscience partake of it then, he papered and put some slices of it into his pocket, to enable him to gratify his longing desire the following day.

During their journey home at night, whilst the weather was lowering, and some distant thunder was occasionally heard, the Romanist made two or three efforts to get an unobserved slice of his favourite meat, which he had no sooner touched than he quitted, owing to a recurrence at the same moment of the phenomenon. When the party, however, had arrived near their homes, and were going over London Bridge, notwithstanding the late elementary warnings, he could not resist

the increased impulse he felt to taste the ham, and having taken out of his pocket one of the slices, just as he was on the point of putting it into his mouth, a loud clap of thunder bursting directly over their heads, he in disappointment and anger threw it into the Thames, exclaiming, “What a fuss is here about a paltry slice of ham!”

Dussek, the favourite piano-forte player, died in Paris on the 17th of August, 1810. Dussek for several years delighted the ladies in England by his excellent performance. He was a highly finished player; his execution was brilliant, his music pleasing, and he displayed great taste and expression. When Dussek left England, in 1799, he proceeded to Germany to Prince ——, who played the piano-forte almost as well as himself. They feasted together every day on music, and washed it down with good old hock. This happy style of living was however interrupted, by Talleyrand requesting the Prince to permit Dussek to form one of his establishment in Paris, for the purpose of teaching some members of his family: and this request being made at the time Bonaparte had acquired his ascendancy in Germany, it was of course immediately complied with. Dussek had entered into advantageous terms with Talleyrand (Prince of Benevento). His salary was eight hundred Napoleons a year. He had a table

for three persons, whereby he was enabled to entertain two friends every day, and no restraint was imposed on him but that of dining with his patron when he saw company. This life of ease and indulgence suited Dussek well; he became very corpulent and inactive, which bringing on disease, after a short illness he departed this life, regretted by all those who were capable of appreciating superior musical talent.

A new romance, called 'The Peasant Boy,' was represented at the Lyceum Theatre on the 1st of January by the Drury Lane company. The music, by Kelly, was much admired. This piece, which became very popular, was written by Mr. Dimond, a respectable dramatist, though not a diamond of the first water.

A concert was given on the 3rd of May, at the concert room of the King's Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Weichsell, leader of the opera band, where an elegant and numerous audience was attracted to hear Mrs. Billington sing for the last time in public. On that occasion she gave a fine composition of Cimarosa's, and 'The soldier tir'd,' in which she seemed determined to leave a lasting impression of her extraordinary powers on her hearers. Her performance being ended, she curtseyed respectfully to the audience, and retired amidst loud and universal applause.

On the 25th of July a performance, consisting of 'Hamlet' and Monk Lewis's popular musical piece, called 'Timour the Tartar,' took place at Covent Garden Theatre for the benefit of the English prisoners in France. The house was full in every part. During the first run of the latter piece, a season or two before, in which Astley's fine horses were exhibited on the stage with surprising effect, it was said by G. C—, "It's no wonder that 'Timour the Tartar' should be performed every night to overflowing houses, when it is considered that horses are so well calculated to draw!"

During the latter part of this season Lord Barrymore having come one evening into the orchestra of Covent Garden Theatre to witness the performance of an opera, invited me to sup with him. I had recently recovered from a severe illness; therefore I declined his invitation; but on his pressing me to oblige him, and assuring me I should only take what quantity of wine I thought proper, I consented, and accompanied him, his brother, and Mr. W. Ware, the leader of the band, to the Bedford Coffee-house, under the piazza of Covent Garden. We had for supper roasted oysters and cold boiled beef, some claret, and one bottle of champagne. At twelve o'clock, Lord Barrymore having paid four pounds for a few shell fish, &c., left us for one of the club-

houses, where the noble members pass the night in play, for the purpose of enjoying the alternate sensations of pleasure and pain. Lord Barrymore came to the title on the premature death of his elder brother, a young man of great dissipation, who having by his example initiated his two younger brothers, who were dependent on him, into his own principles, the manners of the three became so publicly offensive that the appellations of "Newgate," "Cripplegate," (Lord Barrymore being lame,) and "Hellgate," were conferred on them. The death of the elder brother, in the midst of his excesses, was truly awful. Being an officer in the Berkshire militia, he was appointed to the command of a guard to escort some French prisoners to their destination. On the way he halted at a small public house, leaving the care of his curriicle and a fusee in it to his groom, whilst he took some refreshment. Having taken what he required, and amused himself as usual with teaching the landlady a more expert mode of chalking up her scores, at which he was an adept, he returned in high spirits to the carriage; in getting into which his foot or some part of his dress coming in contact with the trigger of the gun, it went off and shot him dead upon the spot.

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 3d of June with one of those splendid galas for which that

elegant place of attraction is so celebrated. Miss Feron and Mrs. Bland, in their songs, ‘ The Romp, or the great Catalani,’ and ‘ Johnny came a courting me,’ both composed by me, were encored. The song of ‘ The Romp, or the great Catalani,’ had become so great a favourite with the public, that at one of the concerts at Plymouth in which Braham and Miss Feron sang, a part of the company calling for ‘ Rule Britannia,’ were opposed by others calling for ‘ The Romp ;’ which latter song, after a considerable contest, being carried by a great majority, was twice sung with vehement applause before ‘ Rule Britannia.’

The Drury Lane company at the Lyceum Theatre represented, on the 9th of September, a new opera in three acts, called ‘ M. P., or the Blue Stocking,’ written by Moore, the elegant translator of Anacreon. The music was composed by Mr. M. P. King, in which he was very happy, “ as happy as a king !” This gentleman, one night at Covent Garden Theatre, in the presence of several persons, said to me, “ Pray, Mr. Parke, how do you compose your pleasing melodies ?” The singularity of the question surprising me a little, I hesitated, when I was relieved by his adding, “ I mean, do you write your melodies first ?” As small things bear an analogy to great ones, it brought to my recollection an anecdote I

had heard of Dr. Fisher, (a former leader of the band and composer to Covent Garden Theatre,) who having weakly imagined that Dr. Arne's inspiration proceeded from the attitude of his instrument, and wishing to get possession of his secret, said to him, "When you composed your fine opera of 'Artaxerxes,' doctor, did you write with the lid of your harpsichord up or down?"

In the year 1809, at the request of my friend Major Topham, I composed the music to a song which he had written, intitled 'The death of General Sir John Moore.' It was sung with great applause at the Covent Garden Theatre by Mr. Bellamy, and at the Lyceum Theatre (where the company of Drury Lane Theatre were then acting) by Mr. Dignum. The famous retreat of the British troops in the Peninsula, equal perhaps to the Ten Thousand of antiquity, commanded by General Sir John Moore, in the face of an overwhelming French force, together with the subsequent battle of Corunna, in which that brave general was killed, and like the immortal Wolfe, died in the arms of victory, afforded a brilliant display of heroism never exceeded even by Britons, by means of which our valiant soldiers were enabled to make an uninterrupted embarkation. An intimate friend of mine (Captain Barlow of the Royal Artillery) who had been engaged in that

trying service, having, like his brother-officers, lost the whole of his baggage, returned to England with scarcely a shoe or stocking to his feet. This young but brave officer, whimsical to relate, had previously been presented with a curious monkey, which during the arduous retreat was the companion of his toils and dangers. Pug grinned and chattered as the balls whizzed about him ; and so powerfully had he been impressed with terror at the noise and confusion of the scene he had witnessed, that at the inn (after being landed,) where his master dined, on the waiter drawing the cork of a bottle of wine, he actually jumped out of the window of the room, which was thirty feet from the ground, and escaped unhurt. Major Topham was the author of “*The Life of Elwes*,” the celebrated miser, and many excellent poems. Perhaps no man’s real character was more mistaken than was the Major’s, owing to the singularity of his dress, which was the cause of his being caricatured in the print shops as ‘*The tip-top Adjutant*.’ Indeed, I was myself rather prejudiced against his external appearance till I became acquainted with him, when I found him a refined scholar and an accomplished gentleman. On his retiring from the life guards he established a new diurnal print which became popular, called ‘*The Fashionable World*;’ and when he left

London some years afterwards to reside on his estate in Yorkshire, he sold it to Mr. Stuart, who continued it under the revived title of 'The Morning Post.' On the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in England, who had been governor-general of India, 'The Morning Post' was purchased of Mr. Stuart by A. Robertson, Esq., late secretary and friend of the Earl; but some of the opposition prints conceiving that it leaned too much towards the government, and having in their observations styled it 'The Nabob's Gazette,' Mr. Robertson, who was of a quiet disposition, was induced to dispose of it to Mr. Byrne, its present proprietor. Major Topham was the oldest and most intimate friend of Miles Peter Andrews, the well-known M. P. and gunpowder manufacturer; and though it may appear extraordinary, it is nevertheless true, that during an acquaintance of fifty years, they had never once had a blow-up. At the commencement of the last and protracted illness of Andrews, Major Topham, at his request, came to London, and remained with him several months till he died. For this act of friendship Andrews, who left his partner 60,000*l.*, bequeathed to the Major 100*l.*, and a like sum to his friend Mr. Wilson, the eminent surgeon, who had attended him through his long illness, and whose fees, had he taken them, would have amounted to three

times that sum. Andrews had for many years been attached to the stage, and as a writer of epilogues many of which are extant, he had scarcely a rival. He also wrote some dramatic pieces, 'Belphegor, or, the Three Wishes,' 'A Trip to Margate,' &c. He was not a dramatist of great strength, but he was occasionally witty, as the following specimen will show: In the latter piece, 'A Trip to Margate,' two apothecaries meeting in the street, after the usual salutations, A. inquires of B. how business goes on; to which B. replies, "very bad."—"Indeed!" says A., "why, you must have made a good thing of the illness of the alderman, for it was a long job."—"So it was," said B.; "but he died, and I got no money. I however got all the empty bottles back again; therefore, though I gained nothing I lost nothing."

1812.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on Saturday the 14th of January, with the serious opera of 'Semiramide.' Catalani and Tramezzani sang with the utmost taste and feeling. The Pantheon opened again for the performance of Italian operas, under the patronage of many of the nobility, who were disgusted with the manager of the King's Theatre. Among the singers engaged were Madame Bertinotti, Signora Collini, Signor

Morelli, &c. Spagnoletti led the band. The first performance consisted of two burlettas composed by Mayer and Portogallo, and ballets. These performances were not permanent. This opposition to the King's Theatre proceeded from Mr. Taylor, the manager, not conceding sufficiently to the subscribers, who perhaps required too much, and from his being of that litigious disposition, (perhaps not unprovoked,) which occasioned him to be continually engaged in law-suits with his performers and others. This habit, which time had confirmed in him, may be best judged of by his own words. Mr. Taylor being at dinner at Mrs. Billington's, a gentleman, a particular friend of mine, in a conversation which led to it, said to him, " You must be dreadfully harassed, Mr. Taylor, by the frequent law-suits you are engaged in."—" O no," replied he, " not in the least: I own that they plagued me a little at first, but, from habit, I could not now exist without them!"

Tramezzani's benefit at the King's Theatre was this season honoured with the patronage of the Prince Regent. He and Catalani sang with great effect on the occasion, in Cimarosa's fine opera, ' *Gli Orazi e Curiazi*. ' The same opera was performed on the 9th of July for Catalani's benefit, when the house was filled in every part; it proved

literally a bumper, and she sang with all that enthusiasm which a bumper usually excites.

The oratorios commenced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 25th of February, with Handel's 'Messiah,' with Mozart's accompaniments. Catalani in 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' was greatly applauded, though she displayed little of that pathos so much admired in Madame Mara's style of singing the same air. Of the accompaniments to Handel's 'Messiah,' by Mozart, I wish to say a word or two. It is not my intention to discuss the subject at length ; but in giving it as my opinion that the accompaniments are not genuine, I shall state a few reasons in support of that opinion, leaving to others the enjoyment of their own. In the first place, as singers of first-rate ability were easily to be obtained at the time it is said he composed them, it appears to me that an elegant writer like Mozart would not have fallen into the old and exploded style of fettering the voice, by making the wind instruments play the theme with the singers. That Handel, in some instances, had recourse to the same expedient, I allow ; but it is well known that he was at times compelled to this by the difficulty he experienced in procuring singers of sufficient ability to do without that aid. In the next place, I think Mozart would not have put harmony on such a

subject as, ‘ All they that walk,’ because the great effect produced by its consisting chiefly of octaves (the sublime of music according to Dr. Crotch) would have deterred him from sullying his judgment by making any addition to it. In the pastoral symphony there is also a redundancy of harmony, which complicates its beautiful and characteristic simplicity, and consequently neutralises its effect. But the strongest conviction I feel as to the posthumous forgery is, that Mozart being a man of consummate genius, and possessing a liberal mind, could not have affected to look down on such a composer as Handel, and casting aside all the courtesies of society, take up his pen for the purpose of depreciating the fame of a great master, under the mask of amending a work that had passed the ordeal of criticism for nearly a century amidst universal admiration, and had been stamped with the indelible mark of supreme excellence. Peter Pindar, in one of his ludicrous poems, relates a story of a man who was the publisher of the last words of malefactors who were executed. This man, on the execution of one Thomas Baxter, (a martyr to religion,) experienced such a rapid sale of his work, that in a few weeks afterwards he put forth a second edition, called ‘ More last words of Thomas Baxter.’ That there has been sent forth a second edition of ‘ More accompaniments,’ by

Mozart (on the same principle perhaps), I can safely aver, for at a rehearsal of 'Alexander's Feast,' for the oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre, two music books were laid on the desk from which I was to play ; on the cover of which was written ' Alexander's Feast, with Mozart's accompaniments ;' and the symphony of one of the songs, ' Bacchus ever fair and young,' beginning with the full band, was actually played ; but it being suddenly stopped, and hastily withdrawn by the director, who probably composed them himself, I could not hear the effect of them.

The first of a set of concerts of vocal and instrumental music given by the Marchioness of Hertford, took place at her mansion in Manchester Square on the 15th of March. The singers were Madame Bertinotti and Signor Tramezzani. Salomon led the band. Amongst the vast assemblage of rank and fashion were the Prince of Wales and his royal brothers. A grand concert of vocal music was given on the same evening by Miles Peter Andrews, Esq., M. P., at his elegant residence in the Green Park, to a host of fashionables. The glees were conducted by the elder Knyvett ; and when it is considered that Knyvett is one of the very best singers in that line, and that his friend who gave the concert is a good judge of music and a manufacturer of gunpowder,

it is no wonder they *went off* in fine style. The band, by a curious coincidence, was led by Mr. Andrews' old Italian friend, Signor *Salt Petre* (Sal Pietro) of the King's Theatre. The concert of ancient music, and the vocal concert were given as usual at the Hanover Square Rooms.

The Drury Lane company, at the Lyceum Theatre, performed for the first time, on the 6th of May, a new opera by Horn, called 'The Devil's Bridge,' in which the music and the singing of Braham and Mrs. Dickons were much and deservedly applauded ; and on the 15th of June following they performed at the same theatre for the last time, pledging themselves to appear at the new theatre in Drury Lane on the 10th of October.

The annual benefit of the Sons of the Clergy took place in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 15th of May ; his Royal Highness the Duke of York was President. The church, in compliment to his Royal Highness, was uncommonly full. At twelve o'clock, when the Lord Mayor, who came in state, and the Royal President had taken their seats, the performance commenced with Handel's overture in 'Esther :' the four bars solo for the oboe in the second movement were played by me, and the passages in the allegro were executed by eight performers on the same instrument. 'The Det-

tingen Te Deum' and a part of the 'Jubilate' were afterwards given; they were succeeded by the fine anthem originally composed for the charity by Dr. Boyce; a work combining science, ingenuity, and effect. The following curious circumstance occurred to Mr. Boyce, son of the doctor, more than twenty years after his father's death: Mr. Boyce received a letter by post from an unknown person, requesting he would call on him immediately, having an important communication to make relative to his late father. The mention of his father induced him to repair to the address indicated, which was in an obscure and dirty court in the heart of St. Giles's. When he arrived there he inquired of the people of the house for the person he came in quest of, and being told he lodged in the three pair of stairs back room, he ascended, and on entering the room, one of the most wretched imaginable, he was addressed by an old man, in tolerably good language, lying on a miserable bed, in an apparent state of great exhaustion, as follows: "Sir, I have been a beggar nearly the whole of my life, and during your good father's time my station was in the street in which he lived; and so kind and liberal was he to me, that few days passed without my receiving marks of his charity. I now feel that I am on my death-bed, and having

been successful in my calling, I request you will accept the amount of my savings, as a token of gratitude to your departed father." Mr. Boyce, who was much struck with the declaration of the old man, told him to be of good cheer, as it was possible he might recover; but the old man added, with a faint smile, " If you will be kind enough to call here again in three days from this, you will receive a parcel directed for you, which will be the last trouble I shall give you." He did call, and found that the beggar had, as he had predicted, breathed his last; and on opening the parcel, to his great surprise he found it to contain the beggar's will in his favour, together with bank notes to the amount of upwards of 2000*l.* !

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 4th of June, with a grand gala in honour of his Majesty's birthday. During the concert Miss Feron sang the popular song, 'The Romp, or the great Catalani,' composed by me, in which she was as usual vehemently encored. Madame Catalani is almost the only singer of eminence that I have not had the pleasure of being acquainted with, for which the following ridiculous circumstance may in some measure account: In composing the above-mentioned song, which contains an imitation of Catalani in one of her best songs, and was intended as a compliment to her great

powers, the recitative which introduces the air, ending with the words “Great Catalani,” it became necessary, in order to make the music accord with the poetry, to repeat a part of the last word, by which it read thus: “Great Cat, great Catalani.” This, I was informed, gave umbrage to the lady, who, having perhaps an aversion to the feline race, said that she liked the song very well, with the exception of the great *cat* in it.

I lately dined and passed the evening at the house of a surgeon of eminence, who, although he had been a believer in the mission of Johanna Southcote, was nevertheless a good sort of man, and was very fond of music. This gentleman, by interlarding his conversation with technical terms, laid himself open to the sarcasms of his *good-natured* friends, who amused themselves frequently at his expense. During dinner, his wife having helped a lady to a hard potatoe, and being requested to give one that was more boiled, the doctor, addressing his spouse in a kind and affectionate manner, said, “My dear, when you help your friends to potatoes you should probe them—you should probe them with a fork, to ascertain if they are sufficiently intenerated!” Afterwards, on her carving a goose, and not being able to hit exactly one of the joints, he said to her, “Mrs. P—, you should study anatomy, and then you

would be competent to dissect the body of an untoward fowl, without splashing your friends with its gravy." In the evening a sort of bread-and-butter concert took place, which was performed by me on the German flute, a daughter of the doctor's on the piano-forte, and Miss B—h on the harp. The doctor, "delighted with the concord of sweet sounds," highly approved of the exertions of the musical trio, but more particularly with those of the *harpiste*, whom he eulogised emphatically, observing to his friends, "That he had heard several ladies play charmingly on that instrument, but that Miss B—h, whilst *operating* on it, had *cut them all up* completely."

The new Drury Lane Theatre Royal opened on the 10th of October, with 'The Devil's Bridge.' Braham and Mrs. Dickons sang admirably in that opera. This superb theatre was so capacious, that the receipts on that night exceeded 700*l.*

1813.

The King's Theatre opened on the 6th of January, with Guglielmi's serious opera 'Sidagero.' Catalani and Tramezzani sang with their usual excellency. Mrs. Dickons, who was engaged for the season, by permission of the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, appeared for the first time, on the 16th of February, as the Countess, in

Mozart's comic opera 'Le Nozze di Figaro.' Madame Catalani played Susanna. In the letter-duet the union of these two ladies' fine voices and their tasteful style of singing produced repeated plaudits and a general encore. This was the first time this beautiful opera was performed in England. It was universally applauded, from the overture, which was repeated, to the fall of the curtain. 'Le Nozze di Figaro,' with 'Semiramide,' and 'Gli Orazi e Curiazi,' were performed to the end of the season, which closed with the former opera on the 30th of July.

There were oratorios during Lent this season at both the winter theatres. At Covent Garden they were sung by Madame Catalani, Mrs. Salmon, a charming singer, Mr. Bartleman, &c. At Drury Lane by Mrs. Dickons, Mrs. Bland, Mr. Pyne, Mr. Bellamy, &c. Mr. Vaccari, first violin to the King of Spain, performed a concerto with great ability. The latter performances were conducted, for the first time at the organ, by Sir George Smart, a recently dubbed knight; an Irish one, who might have said with Faulconbridge, in Shakspeare's King John, "Now can I make any Joan a lady."

The concert of ancient music was this season deprived of one of its greatest ornaments, by the death of Mr. Harrison, the tenor singer, as was

the vocal concert, of which he was one of the founders. A new instrumental concert, by subscription, for nine nights, called ‘the Philharmonic,’ so named perhaps after the Philharmonic academy in Bologna, was established this year at the Argyll Rooms, in which so much talent was displayed, that no doubt could be entertained of its future success.

The only musical piece produced at the winter theatres was on the 9th of April, when a superb Asiatic spectacle called ‘Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp,’ was brought out. The music of this favourite piece was composed by Messrs. W. Ware and Condell, and possesses considerable merit.

It has been a custom, time out of mind, among persons not remarkable for fine feelings or good breeding, to give in derision the appellation of my lord to men who are unfortunately hump-backed. Little Q—n, whose altitude did not exceed four feet and a half, and was at least as pompous as he was high, held a snug place under government, and frequently passed his evenings behind the scenes of Covent Garden Theatre. One very dark night, prior to the general introduction of gas lights, while I was walking down Catherine Street in the Strand, I perceived little Q—n before me, followed by a poor woman with two children in her arms, begging alms of him.

The little gentleman at length appearing inclined to compassionate her forlorn situation, the pauper, to enforce her suit, said, as is common with them, “Pray, my lord, do, my lord, bestow your charity!” on which little Q—n, hastily withdrawing his hand from his pocket, cried out with great warmth, “Begone, you jade! I will not give you a farthing!”

At Vauxhall Gardens a grand musical festival of unparalleled splendour, called ‘The Vittoria Fête,’ was given on the 20th of July, to celebrate the achievements of the Marquis, afterwards Duke, of Wellington, and the brave army under his command in the Peninsula. His Royal Highness the Duke of York, commander-in-chief, by desire of the Prince Regent, presided, assisted by a hundred stewards, consisting of noblemen and gentlemen of the first distinction. The entertainments consisted of a grand dinner for a thousand gentlemen, at two guineas per head; which number actually dined there, and a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music in the evening, at which was assembled such a crowd of respectable persons, as were perhaps never before witnessed at any place of public entertainment. The number exceeded twelve thousand, and the difficulty at night of procuring refreshments was such, that in various parts of the splendidly illuminated gar-

dens were seen a brace of dukes regaling themselves from a wine bottle and glasses they held in their hands, a bevy of countesses devouring a cold chicken, which they had separated with their delicate fingers, and a plump citizen's wife, who would have fainted, had she not been timely relieved by a glass of water, with a little brandy in it of course. Amidst the elegant confusion which prevailed, I had the good fortune to sup in a private room in the house of the proprietor of the gardens with some friends, who were afterwards joined by the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the stewards, whose brilliant conversation I had the pleasure to share till day-light the next morning.

In the following month, September, I dined with Mrs. Barrett at her elegant villa at Stockwell, where I met Sir Thomas Turton, Bart., Sir John and Lady Douglas, Mrs. Billington, the elegant Mrs. Wyche, Mr. Miles Peter Andrews, M.P., Major Topham, Mr. Hopkinson, the banker, Mr. Barrett, the proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, and Mr. Dignum, the vocalist. In the evening Mrs. Billington sat down to the piano-forte, and though it was two years since she had retired from the profession, she sang and accompanied herself in an air of Zingarelli's with the same sweet voice and refined taste which had ever distin-

guished her. Some short time afterwards, whilst several of the party were engaged at the card-tables, I drew, unobserved, a flageolet from my pocket, and played on it Shield's pretty air 'Ye lasses of Dublin,' which being quite unexpected, excited so much interest, especially with Mrs. Billington, that I was requested to repeat it. As each person present endeavoured to contribute to the general amusement, Dignum, who fancied that he had a knack of playing with his fingers on a table, in imitation of a piano-forte, with such perfection that his auditors could recognise the tune, exhibited this rare accomplishment, and being highly gratified by a lady accidentally naming the air he had been pretending to play, he exultingly said to his old friend, Major Topham, "Now, major! can you tell what I am playing?" The major, who appeared to listen attentively, replied, "O yes, Dignum, I know what you are playing perfectly well—you are playing the fool!" The laugh which followed was general, but no one enjoyed it more than Dignum. After a supper in which Mrs. Barrett did the honours of her table with her usual elegance and ease, Mrs. Billington sang the Scotch ballad, 'Auld Robin Grey,' without accompaniment, delightfully, and a part in a glee with Dignum and me. Dignum sang a couple of his interesting songs. Mr.

Hopkinson also contributed to the hilarity of the evening, by giving a song as an improvisatore, an extempore poet, in which he introduced observations on the whole of the party, addressing a short verse to each, in which were enumerated, in a clever and witty manner, the graces, the professions, and the talents of those present, with great point and humour. The extreme gratification which this party afforded kept us together until a late hour. Mrs. Billington gave me a seat in her carriage, and set me down at my own door.

Music had now a short breathing time, or rather a reprieve, for there was none executed till the winter theatres opened, when novelty, the great theatrical magnet, rearing her seducing face, a new melo-dramatic piece, in two acts, was produced, called ‘The Miller and his Men.’ The drama was written by Mr. Pocock, and the music, composed by Mr. Bishop, is pleasing, appropriate, and excellent throughout. At the same theatre the celebrated ‘Beggar’s Opera’ was performed on the 14th of December, having, to use a theatrical phrase, been cut down into two acts. Miss Stephens sang the airs of Polly in a chaste and effective style, and Incledon in the songs of Macheath was excellent. The “cutting down” Gay’s popular opera made a friend of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of the theatre, observe, while expos-

tulating with him on the subject, that it was not only injudicious, but cruel. “What!” exclaimed Mr. Harris, “do you call it cruel, when I find a piece hanging, to cut it down?” The ‘Beggar’s Opera,’ which had been refused at Drury Lane Theatre, was first brought out at the theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, in the year 1727, under the management of Mr. Rich. Its success was unprecedented; it ran sixty-three consecutive nights during the first season, with universal applause. The great profit derived from it by Gay the author, and Rich the manager, made a wit of that day observe, that “the ‘Beggar’s Opera’ had made Gay rich, and Rich gay!”

1814.

The affairs of the King’s Theatre having been a long time in Chancery, the Italian Opera did not open this season till considerably after its usual time, owing to the Lord Chancellor not having given his decree till the 10th of March, by which Mr. Waters was appointed sole manager of the concern, and from the circumstance of Madame Catalani having determined not to accept any other terms than the following: namely, three thousand pounds salary for the season, and two benefits, the first a clear one. The manager resisted these terms, and she held out, confidently

expecting that he would at length be compelled to comply with them. In this however she was disappointed, for Mr. Waters having surmounted the difficulties he had had to contend against, opened the theatre on the 12th of April, with Cimarosa's charming opera, 'Gli Orazi e Curiazi.' In this opera Madame Ferlendis and Signor Marzochi appeared for the first time in England. The former had a pleasing voice, and sang in good style, but she did not make a very favourable impression. The voice of the latter was powerful, and of tolerably good quality, and he sang with judgment. Mrs. Dickons was also engaged. Her fine voice and excellent acting were highly applauded here. Mr. Waters, though he had engaged several new performers, prudently judging that some failures might take place, had despatched an agent to Italy to engage Madame Grassini, who arrived in London in time to appear on the 27th of May in the above-named opera. When Grassini came on the stage she was received with tumultuous applause, and her performance throughout the opera elicited the same marks of approbation.

Oratorios were this year given at both our theatres. They commenced on the 25th of February. At Covent Garden Theatre, the fine voices and admirable taste of Catalani and Mrs. Salmon

afforded infinite gratification to the lovers of that style of music. Braham gave the opening of 'The Messiah' with great expression. Amongst the performances at Drury Lane Theatre, was that of Beethoven's new oratorio in one act, called 'The Mount of Olives,' in which Mrs. Dickons sang the principal part with great ability. 'The Mount of Olives' is a most elaborate, scientific, and ingenious composition, though it displays little of that fascinating melody which "takes the imprisoned soul and laps it in Elysium." It is to the ear what the olive is to the palate, not very pleasing at first, but by repetition may become highly gratifying.

In addition to the three established concerts (the Ancient, the Vocal, and the Philharmonic), Madame Catalani undertook twelve by subscription. The first took place at the Argyll Rooms on the 31st of March. She called in the aid of Tramezzani and Naldi, and Salomon led the band ; but her subscription failing, she abandoned the undertaking altogether, after the sixth performance.

On the 9th of April the musical world was deprived of one of its greatest ornaments, by the death of the celebrated Dr. Charles Burney, Mus. Doc., which took place at his apartment in Chelsea College. Dr. Burney was born

at Shrewsbury, in the month of April 1726. The first rudiments of his musical education were obtained under Mr. Baker, the organist of the cathedral of Chester, after which he is said to have studied for some time with a brother-in-law, who was an eminent teacher of music in Shrewsbury. When about eighteen years of age he was sent to London, and placed for three years under the tuition of Dr. Arne. He had not long completed his studies under this celebrated composer before he was appointed organist of St. Dionis Back-Church in Fenchurch Street. In 1751 he was employed to compose the music to 'Robin Hood,' a comic opera, which was performed at Drury Lane Theatre, but without any great success, as it had little to recommend it to notice beyond its musical merit: and music was not at that time quite so much the idol of public adoration as at present. For the same theatre in the ensuing year he produced the pantomime of 'Queen Mab,' which was received with great and universal applause, and had a long run.

Mr. Burney's health having suffered severely, he was induced to retire into the country, and a vacancy having occurred in the place of organist at Lynn in Norfolk, he offered himself as a candidate for it, and was successful. In this situation he continued about nine years, and during his

residence at Lynn first formed the design of compiling his General History of Music. Soon after his return to London he, in 1766, brought out at Drury Lane Theatre a musical entertainment, entitled 'The Cunning Man.' This was a translation by himself from Rousseau's petit opera of 'Le Devin du Village ;' yet, notwithstanding the elegance of the translation, and the excellence of the music, it proved unsuccessful. Shortly afterwards he was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Music in the University of Oxford. The exercise which he composed for this occasion was considered so excellent, that it was several times performed at the Oxford music meetings, and was also performed under the direction of the celebrated Emanuel Bach, at St. Catherine's church, Hamburg.

A short time subsequently to the taking of his degree he travelled through France and Italy, not only with a view towards improvement in his profession, but also with the intention of collecting materials for his History of Music. In 1771 he published his 'Musical Tour, or, Present State of Music in France and Italy.' In 1772 he went into Holland, the Netherlands, and Germany, and in the course of the ensuing year published an account of this journey, in two volumes in octavo. This work gave birth to the whimsical

burlesque of it by Joel Collier. Both these works, however, were well received by the public; and it will be considered no mean praise that Dr. Johnson acknowledged that he had the plan of them in his mind when he formed the journal of his voyage to the Hebrides. About this time Dr. Burney was elected a fellow of the Royal Society.

In 1776 he gave to the public the first volume of his 'General History of Music.' The remaining three volumes were published at different intervals betwixt this time and the year 1789. This highly valuable and elaborate work has received from the musical world the most uniform and unequivocal testimonies of applause: and for extent of information on the subject of which it treats, and the general elegance of its style, it is not perhaps exceeded by any publication in the English language.

After the grand musical festival at Westminster Abbey, in commemoration of Handel, Dr. Burney, by desire of his Majesty George the Third, wrote an account of it, and in the year 1785 it was published for the benefit of the Musical Fund.

Besides the works already mentioned, Dr. Burney has published a set of trios for two violins and a bass, two books of duets, and several sonatas and lessons for the piano-forte, a sonata *à trois mains*, six cornet pieces with an intro-

duction, and fuge for the organ, two or three anthems, and 'La musica che si canta annualmente nelle funzioni della settimana santa, nella Capella Pontificia; composta dal Palestrina, Allegri e Bai Racolta.'

Dr. Burney is also the author of a 'Life of Metastasio,' published in the year 1796, and some other literary productions. He held the situation of organist to Chelsea Hospital and resided in apartments in that college. He was twice married, and was the father of Charles Burney L.L.D. of Greenwich, well known to the world as an almost unrivalled Greek scholar, Captain Burney of the navy, who sailed round the world with Captain Cooke, and who is the author of a valuable work on the History of Maritime Discovery, and Madame d'Arblay, the writer of *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, &c.

Dr. Burney, who had for many years before his death retired from the public part of his profession, possessed an amiable disposition, was an accomplished and polished gentleman, and was highly valued and respected by the extensive and refined circle in which he had been accustomed to move.

The Italian Opera House being closed during the three first months of the winter season, the managers of the two English theatres were on the

alert, and at that of Drury Lane a new opera, called ‘Narensky,’ was produced on the 18th of January. The music was by Horn and Braham. Braham introduced in this piece an effective novelty of his own invention, that of occasionally singing an echo to his own voice, which was loudly applauded ; and Mrs. Dickons, whose acting was as conspicuous as her singing, sang a bravura, by Horn, which was a model for neatness and brilliancy.

The manager of Covent Garden Theatre, stimulated by the successful exertions of the other house, produced, on the 1st of February, a new comic opera, intitled ‘The Farmer’s Wife,’ written by Mr. C. Dibdin. In this piece Miss Stephens sang an air and a pollaca with great sweetness, and Sinclair introduced Bishop’s ‘Love has eyes,’ which was encored. The music of this highly successful opera was supplied by six composers, Messrs. Bishop, Reeve, Condell, T. Welsh, Davy, and Addison ; and it was got up with such expedition, as to prove that “many hands make light work.”

Mr. Harris, the proprietor and manager of Covent Garden Theatre, was never known to invite any of his performers to his table, with the exception of Mr. Lewis, who was his deputy-manager, and Mr. Shield, his composer. This

being spoken of one morning in the green-room during a rehearsal, George Cooke, the popular actor, who had through his attraction so often filled his treasury, presuming on this, laid a wager of a rump and dozen with one of his brethren that he would go and partake of a hot dinner at the table of the manager, though others could not. Having some business with Mr. Harris, relative to his approaching benefit, he set off in a post-chaise, not doubting that he should prove the winner. When Cooke had arrived at the house of Mr. Harris, near Uxbridge, he was received by that gentleman in the drawing-room, in so friendly a manner, that Cooke made sure of winning. When their conversation was ended, however, Cooke being informed that refreshments were prepared for him in an ante-room, muttered with great disappointment, "I now see I shall lose!" Although on the stage Cooke acted the profound hypocrite, Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm, to admiration, he could not dissemble on that occasion; for whilst eating, he bit his *meat* and his *lips* alternately, and drank and grinned like Shylock, to the no small terror of the servant who waited on him. When he had finished his repast he entered his chaise and drove to London, highly displeased at the indignity he had, as he thought, suffered. On entering the theatre in the evening,

Cooke meeting his opponent, exclaimed with much apparent vexation, “I have lost my wager; for though he gave me a warm reception, I only partook of a cold collation!” The principal performers of the theatre were not surprised at Cooke’s failure, for the odds were two to one against him, from the confirmed hauteur of the manager, and the probability of his having heard of the part Cooke had recently acted at the house of Munden. That admirable comedian, (Munden,) who was one of the best gags (as the actors term it) at making a benefit, and who never gave a dinner but for the purpose of securing that object, had one of those politic parties at his house at Kentish Town, to which Cooke, as a point of attraction, was invited. The assemblage, which was highly respectable, sat down to dinner at four o’clock. Cooke was uncommonly brilliant, his anecdotes flying about to the high gratification of the company. Some time after dinner, however, Cooke (having as usual patronised the wine merchant, whereby he became all imagination and mischief) being opposed in an opinion he had broached by a gentleman who sat next to him, without further ceremony knocked him down; and Munden, who rushed to the assistance of his friend, shared his fate! This occurrence was related to me by Munden, who in conclusion vowed

that it should be the last time Cooke should lay him and his friends, like *empty bottles*, under the *table*.

The following rare instance of longevity, and the preservation of faculty, should not be passed over: on the 26th of February died, at the age of 101, Mr. Bartholomew Johnson, of Scarborough. That gentleman was a distinguished violoncello player, and was so much respected by the nobility and gentry of his county, that they gave a grand dinner at the hotel on the day he attained his centenary. Mr. Johnson's faculties were so unimpaired, that in the evening of that day he performed a minuet and trio on the violoncello (composed by himself expressly for the occasion) with the utmost precision, to the admiration of his numerous and exalted friends and patrons.

The treaty of peace having been signed in Paris on the 30th of May, a visit to this country was paid by the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the two Princes, sons of the latter. They arrived in London in the early part of June. The metropolis was at that time a scene of universal gaiety, and the presence of the august strangers added greatly to the general satisfaction. The theatres were nightly crowded with audiences whose simultaneous and vociferous calls for the national songs, 'God save the King,' and 'Rule

Britannia,' showed that loyalty and patriotism had wound up all hearts to the sweet enthusiasm of national joy. In the streets an artificial day was produced, by the blaze of light which beamed from the windows of every habitation, from the humble dwelling of the mechanic, to the gorgeous palace of the prince, whilst troops of happy citizens, admiring the scene, congratulated each other on the glorious event. Among the public demonstrations of loyalty, few were equal to the splendid *fête* given at Vauxhall Gardens on the 15th of June. The gardens were illuminated by thirty thousand lamps of various colours. The concert was composed of military pieces, and at the close of the first act a new 'Ode to Peace,' composed by me for the occasion, was performed. It was received with great applause, and was repeated on several succeeding evenings. The fireworks, which wound up the evening's entertainments, were the most brilliant imaginable, and the performances altogether delighted an audience amounting to at least ten thousand persons.

The celebrated Charles Dibdin, the composer, died on the 25th of July, in very embarrassed circumstances. Dibdin was one of the greatest musical geniuses of his time. He did not display a profundity of science, it is true, but as a melodist he was almost unrivalled. His songs, which are

remarkable for the beauty of their melodies, are also replete with nature, taste, and genius, and cannot fail to be admired even at the present time, when science has almost turned poor melody out of doors. Indeed many of the modern compositions abound with science so *abstruse*, that they are as little understood in a concert room as the Latin service in a Roman Catholic chapel. The cause of the embarrassments under which that talented man had laboured, it would perhaps be difficult to ascertain ; but it has been generally believed that they in a great measure proceeded from his being a great epicure, and his consequent fondness for the indulgences of the table. This appears to me not improbable, and a circumstance within my own knowledge seems to confirm it. In January of the last year I dined with Mrs. Dickons, the admired singer, who had taken the house attached to the theatre in Leicester Place, in which Dibdin had resided while he performed there. The back-room (a drawing-room) had, while he occupied it, been used as a kitchen, and there was still remaining a small sliding-door in the wainscot, through which his cook passed the dishes of hot meat, &c. to a sideboard in the adjoining dining-room, to prevent their being cooled by being taken two or three yards through the passage to the room door. This was a refinement

on luxury which I had never witnessed, except at the Garrick's Head Coffee-house, in Bow Street, Covent Garden, where a former landlord, named Spencer, (who had been a harlequin at Drury Lane Theatre,) caused a pantomime trap to be constructed in the coffee-room, directly over the kitchen, when by a stamp with his foot, up came a rump steak, or a mutton chop, hissing hot, and as expeditiously as if harlequin had waved his enchanted sword for it. That artists are frequently too careless about their pecuniary concerns I admit ; but, without meaning to countenance so palpable a fault, I think something may be offered in extenuation. That an artist, who is ambitious of rising to pre-eminence in his profession, can only achieve it by devoting himself entirely to study, must be obvious. Indeed numerous instances may be adduced in which they have even abridged their natural rest to attain that object. If therefore his mind is so wholly absorbed by his professional pursuits, may not some small allowance be made (considering the fallibility of human nature) for neglect, which is perhaps imputable to those whom he unavoidably intrusts with the direction of his affairs ? It may be asked, how is society benefited by music ? I reply, that by its forming a predominant feature in the education of the female sex, it engages

their attention, and delights their minds by its fascinations, till the judgment is sufficiently matured to enable them to fix their destinies in life with a fair prospect of happiness. With the youth of our sex also, the advantages are no less important; for by mixing in polite assemblies, and listening to the charms of music, which soothes pain, and keeps vice at a distance, young men may be estranged from the gaming-table and other demoralising scenes, which seldom fail to entail fatal consequences on their votaries. Nor should it be forgotten, that by the attractions which music creates, trade itself feels the benefit of its stimulating power through all its ramifications.

In quitting this subject I will offer one observation to students. If they imagine that, when they have placed themselves on a level with the best artists of their time, they have accomplished their task, they are mistaken. No! they must advance into the field of science beyond them, if it is only a single step, or they do nothing for the art they profess, which otherwise will remain stationary.

A new operatic piece in two acts, called 'John of Paris,' and taken from the French stage, was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 8th of November. The original French music of this

piece, by Boieldieu, is scientific, tasteful, and pleasing. In the song most popular among the Parisians, 'The Troubadour,' Miss Stephens displayed her fine voice; and setting aside all French grace and vivacity, showed herself a legitimate daughter of honest John Bull. This piece went off with universal applause, and had a long run.

1815.

The King's Theatre opened on the 10th of January, with a new serious opera, called 'Ade-lasia Alleranno.' The music was by Mayer, a composer then not much known. In this opera Madame Sessi, Signor Graan, and Signor Levasseur, made their first appearance in England. Madame Sessi's voice was clear and powerful; its compass was extensive, and her style tasteful; but she sang without expression. The voice of Signor Graan was of a good quality, and he sang with elegance and feeling; and Signor Levasseur had a powerful bass voice, which he managed with skill. The two former were very successful. The music of this opera is highly creditable to its composer. On Thursday the 6th of July a grand performance took place at the King's Theatre, under the immediate patronage of the Prince Regent, in honour of the victory gained over Napoleon on the 18th of June, at Waterloo, and for the exclusive benefit

of the widows and children of those soldiers who gloriously and bravely fell on that occasion. The performances were, the last act of the serious opera, 'I Ratti Epeso;' and, by permission of the Prince Regent, Beethoven's 'Battle piece,' &c. Madame Sessi sang 'Rule Britannia;' and 'God save the King,' which was loudly called for, was sung twice amidst tumultuous applause, from one of the most numerous audiences ever witnessed at this theatre.—“ So should desert in arms be crowned.”

That the British nation is a powerful one, her fleets and armies have attested time out of mind ; and that the sons of British soil evince great individual courage, is no less true. Their manner, however, of settling their private quarrels by the pistol in high, and the fists in low life, has given rise to much diversity of opinion ; but as the latter is a strong national characteristic, it has been much encouraged, notwithstanding that it would be “ more honoured in the breach than in the observance.” Indeed pugilism had become so fashionable, that many of the most exalted personages, although death had in several instances occurred, considered it no disgrace, not only to encourage, but to witness these ferocious combats.

This species of contest has, however, for some

time past been on the decline, and is now rather at a low ebb. Many of the professors, however, of that learned science, having a language of their own, denominated by their lexicographers slang, have fought their way into comfortable retirement; and having become publicans as well as sinners, they by advertisement invite all the double-refined part of society to partake of the convivialities of their sanctuaries, at the signs of "The Goose and Gridiron,"—"The Hole in the Wall,"—"The Cat and Bagpipes," &c. There, during "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," fresh scenes of slaughter are projected! The boxing system thirty years ago had arrived at such a height, and was so much patronised, that it was considered a mark of distinction in a gentleman to appear as the avowed patron of one of those modern gladiators; and I recollect at the house of a Member of Parliament of large fortune, in Bruton Street, having had the honour of being introduced to Humphreys, the famous pugilist of that day, (a portrait of whom, by Hopner, hung over the fire-place,) who joined the party after dinner to drink claret! We have also specimens of the destructive powers of some of the canine race at the well-known pit in Westminster, where a popular dog, named Billy, has killed one hundred rats in the short space of ten minutes! This extraordinary cur is held in

such estimation by the amateurs, that considerable sums have been offered for him, which his master has constantly rejected, saying, at the same time, —“If ever I sells this here dog, I von’t take too much for him.” Before the preceding infatuations started up contests in the fine arts occasionally took place, in patronising which gentlemen of high rank were justly proud. Amongst these were one betwixt the two great painters, Sir Joshua Reynolds and the celebrated Gainsborough. These artists, during the American war, were each employed to paint a portrait of General Tarleton, who in that memorable contest had eminently distinguished himself. Sir Joshua’s picture (a fine composition) represented the hero in the act of anxiously fastening on one of his spurs to join the combat, attended by a black soldier holding the reins of his impatient charger. Gainsborough’s painting represented the general simply on horseback scouring the plain at full speed, after the manner of the sign of the Horse and Groom at Chelsea! These two pictures were exhibited the same year at Somerset House. Gainsborough, however, in a succeeding exhibition, made ample amends for this solitary instance of failure, by producing his fine picture of ‘The Maid and the three young Pigs.’ Nothing perhaps could be more exquisitely pourtrayed than the pigs, one of

whom in particular appeared as if it breathed ; but his representation of the maid, who had brought them their food, and was looking at them while they were eating it, was, unlike the other parts of the picture, ill-drawn, displaying too much of his usual coarseness of colouring. On this Peter Pindar said in one of his odes to painters :—

The white pig I allow
Is an admirable sow,
I wish to say the same of the maid !

This picture, which excited the admiration of all the lovers of the art, was (highly to the honour of both artists) purchased by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Being acquainted with Gainsborough, at the period when this picture was in progress, I have seen at his house in Pall Mall the three little pigs (who did not, in the common phrase, sit for their likenesses) gamboling about his painting room, whilst he was catching an attitude or a leer from them at his easel.

Signora Anna Selina Storace, who had delighted the public both on the Italian and the English stage, died in July 1814, at Walton on Thames. She was born in England, and was the daughter of Mr. Stephano Storace, an Italian, who was for many years a distinguished performer on the double bass at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket.

Signora Storace, whose mother was an English-woman, received her musical education principally in Italy, where she became so great a favourite, that Bianchi composed the favourite opera 'Castore e Polluce' expressly for her. She came to England from Vienna, where she had been a great favourite, and she made her first appearance at the King's Theatre in 1787, where her reception was most flattering. In the year 1789 she appeared on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre in a comic opera, composed and compiled by her brother Stephen Storace, called 'The Haunted Tower.' The great success of this opera was as much attributable to the superiority of Signora Storace's histrionic and vocal powers, as to the merits of her brother's music. After her brother's death, in 1796, she again visited the continent, and returned to London in the year 1801, having, while in Vienna, made an engagement with Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, on the boards of which she appeared with great *éclat* in an opera, composed by Mazzinghi and Reeve, called 'Chains of the Heart,' and afterwards, in the operas of 'The Cabinet' and the 'English Fleet,' she delighted the audience whilst she contributed greatly to their success. In the year 1806 she removed to Drury Lane Theatre, where she continued to gratify the public to the

end of the season of 1808, when she retired from her profession, after more than twenty years' successful exertions. During her professional career Signora Storace had experienced so many instances of ingratitude from those whose interests she had promoted, as would have justified her in saying with the poet,—“*Ingratitude is, as if this mouth should tear this hand for lifting food to it.*” This, however, did not abate her liberality; and amongst other kind bequests she made, was one of a thousand pounds to the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians.

The oratorios, which commenced on the 18th of February, were performed at both the winter theatres. Drury Lane began with the first part of Haydn’s ‘*Creation*,’ Beethoven’s ‘*Battle symphony*,’ &c. Madame Sessi and Mrs. Dickons sang with great effect. The first part of the ‘*Creation*’ was likewise given at Covent Garden. Catalani was not engaged this season, and Miss Stephens, the charms of whose voice were perhaps not inferior to hers, took her place, supported by Mrs. Salmon and Braham.

Besides the Ancient, the Vocal and the Philharmonic concerts, the Marchionesses of Hertford and Salisbury gave concerts at their respective mansions, which drew together all the flower of the *haut ton*.

The only theatrical novelty this season was a new comic opera in two acts, produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 1st of February, called 'Brother and Sister.' The music was composed by Bishop and Reeve. In this piece Miss Stephens was very successful in a song by Bishop, in which, in imitation of Braham's song in 'Narensky,' she sang an echo to her own voice with great ability. A comic song, by Reeve, 'Je ne sais quoi,' was encored. "The allegro of the overture," says a critic, "which is a concertante for the flute, clarionet, and oboe, was admirably performed by Messrs. Birch, Hopkins, and W. T. Parke." The whole of the music is excellent. In this piece the principal male-singing character was performed by Mr. Duruset, a young performer of promise; Incledon, in consequence of a difference with the manager, having suddenly retired. There had not been any voice equal to Incledon's on the English stage since he first came out at Covent Garden Theatre in the year 1790. His ear was so perfect, that I never heard him sing out of tune during the twenty-four years he was before the public. He did not, however, know any thing of music; but his memory was so retentive, that when a piece had been once played to him, he retained it ever after. Incledon, while he fancied he possessed great sagacity, was so unsuspecting, that almost

any one could practise on his credulity, as the following whimsical circumstance will show: This admirable singer, who made a greater benefit than any of the other performers belonging to the theatre, became so anxious when it was near, that he could not refrain going every morning to the box-book, at the box-book-keeper's office, to see how many places were taken; and a week before his last, observing the names to be few besides those of his own private friends, he said to Brandon,—“D—n it, Jem, if the nobility don't come forward as usual, I shall cut but a poor figure this time.”—“Don't be afraid,” said Brandon, “I dare say we shall do a great deal for you to-day.”—“Well!” replied Incledon, “I hope you will; and as I go home to dinner I will look in again.” Incledon, who was not very familiar with Debrett's Peerage, returning at four o'clock in the afternoon, hastened to the book, and read aloud the following fictitious names, which Brandon, as a joke, had put down during his absence:—“The Marquis of Piccadilly,”—“The Duke of Windsor.”—“Ah!” said he, “that must be one of the royal family!”—“Lord Highgate,”—and “The Bishop of Gravesend!”—“Well!” said he to Brandon, quite delighted, “if we get on as well to-morrow as we have done to-day, I shall have a number of distinguished titles present!”

Ranelagh Gardens, that once fashionable place of resort for the great and the gay, being now shut up, a short account of them may not be unacceptable : Ranelagh was first planned by Mr. Lacy, the joint patentee of Drury Lane Theatre with Garrick, in the year 1744. The performances were first given in the morning, but were afterwards changed to the evening. The gardens, which were beautiful, extended down to the Thames, where a handsome landing-place had been constructed for those parties who chose to go by water. The Rotunda was an elegant and spacious building, with boxes round the interior, for the accommodation of the company promenading and taking refreshments, whilst some excellent music, by singers and musicians of the first ability, was performed in a superb orchestra erected in its centre. When the concert was ended fireworks of a splendid description were displayed in the gardens, which terminated the entertainments of the evening in time for the *haut ton* to take a late supper at Vauxhall Gardens. The entrance to this elegant place was in Ranelagh Walk, whither the visitors were driven through a long avenue of majestic trees ; and the area before the gate was sufficiently spacious to contain a great number of carriages. At this gate, when the nobility and gentry came out, there were always a great

number of link-boys, who, as usual, were very clamorous to be permitted to call up their coaches. One night, on several of the musicians coming out at the same time as the company, they were saluted with “ Whose carriage, your honour ? ” “ Coach, your honour ? ” &c. till one of the link-men, more knowing than his fellows, putting his torch up to their faces, called out to his companions, “ Vy, don’t you know ‘em ? —they’re only the call-birds ! ” This fascinating place was for many years patronised by the Prince of Wales (his late Majesty George the Fourth) ; but the gardens, &c. getting into incompetent hands, they progressively declined in popularity till they were closed for ever.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 4th of June, and on the 12th of August a superb fêté was given in honour of the natal day of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, which was attended by upwards of fourteen thousand persons. It may be observed, that the night in celebration of the birthday of the Prince of Wales was uniformly the greatest night in the season. The concert (including the concertos on the organ and oboe, by Hook and me) was much applauded, and amongst the songs, two new ones, ‘ The triple courtship,’ and ‘ You don’t exactly suit me,’ sung by Miss Feron and Mrs. Bland (both com-

posed by me) were vehemently encored, as was Dignum in 'The Prince and old England for ever.'

1816.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 17th of January, with a new musical drama, called 'Griselda, osia la virtu in cimento.' The music was by Paer. In this opera Madame Fodor made her first appearance before a British audience. She displayed great sweetness of voice and delicacy of expression. She was greatly applauded, particularly in her air, 'Griselda lareggio,' accompanied on the violin by Signor Spagnoletti. Naldi also sang and acted admirably. There were several other performers engaged this season, but their talents not proving conspicuous, Braham was engaged, and appeared with Madame Fodor on the 5th of March, in Mozart's fine serious opera 'La Clemenza di Tito,' in which they were both loudly applauded, and in the duet 'Ah perdona,' were vehemently encored.

The only novelty at the Covent Garden oratorios this season was the appearance of Mr. T. Cooke, the violin player, as a principal singer. Apollo was not only god of music but of poetry. Lord Mountjoy informed me that Mr. Cooke, at a masquerade in Dublin, displayed such musical ver-

satility, that while the band were gone out to take refreshments, he alternately took up and played on all their different instruments.

There were not any concerts this year but the three established ones, the Ancient, the Vocal, and the Philharmonic. The latter, from its excellence, had become popular.

This winter I became acquainted with a musical gentleman, named Fitzgerald, lately arrived from the sister isle, whose conversation, according to the genius of his country, was whimsically original. Walking with him one morning in the streets of London, he suddenly stooped, and taking up a stone from the ground, said, “ You see I did not bend my body to the earth for nothing, for I have got a good flint, and want only a gun and some powder and shot to be enabled to go shooting!” One morning when I had taken breakfast with him, he became a little irritated in consequence of the boy not having brought him, at the usual hour, the newspaper, which he daily hired for an hour to read. When the lad had presently afterwards arrived with it, he said to him with much warmth, “ There, now, you spaldeen, as you did not bring it sooner, you may take it back again! What! did not I make an agreement with your master that I should have the first *rading* of it?—and now, after others

have taken all the *crame* off it, you think that I will put up with the skim-milk!" Speaking of exercise being an excellent thing to keep people in health, he said, "By my faith, I never was ill in my life while in my own *swate* country, for whenever I found myself unwell, instead of sending for the doctor to make me worse, I took a good rattling gallop for an hour or two on the outside of a horse, and returned home as well as if nothing had been the matter with me." This gentleman was occasionally betrayed into a pun, a thing he professed to abhor, and, on the advantages of early education being the topic at a house where he and I dined, he observed to the lady of the house, "How can it be expected, madam, that children will become sharp, unless they have a good edge-e-cation (education) put upon them?"

I went in the summer with Mr. Fitzgerald to dine at the domain (as the Irish call their country houses) of his friend, Mr. S——h, near Ealing. Mr. S—, who was a great anthologist, conducted us before dinner to his gardens to view his fine collection of flowers. Being much struck with the variety as well as the beauty of them, I exclaimed, "These are superb, indeed!" On which Mr. S. observed, that he believed they included every admired flower England afforded. "Pardon me, sir," said Mr. F., "there is one beautiful flower

absent, which I prize beyond all others.”—“Which is that?” asked his friend. “By my faith, sir, rejoined the Hibernian, “it is that most beautiful of all beautiful flowers,—a cauliflower !”

I dined with this gentleman at the Freemasons' Tavern, with a party which had been formed eight or ten days previously. When we were assembled at the dinner table, a young gentleman, who had been one of the most active promoters of the meeting, was absent; and on his friend Mr. Fitzgerald being asked the cause of it, he replied, “Faith he is better engaged. He is gone on a party of pleasure in a mourning coach!” On being requested to explain, he said, “By Saint Patrick, the thing is clare enough, a party of pleasure in a mourning coach is, when the heir to a rich man attends his funeral !”

On the 17th of January Shakspeare's play of ‘The Midsummer Night's Dream’ was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre, interspersed with music. The words of the songs were taken from his poems. The music, composed and arranged by Bishop, (amongst which is R. T. Stevens' beautiful glee, ‘Ye spotted snakes,’) is creditable to his taste. At the same theatre a new opera in three acts, called ‘Guy Mannering,’ founded on Walter Scott's novel, was performed for the first time on the 12th of March. The new music (for

it was partly compiled) by Bishop and Whittaker is of a superior order; and the trio, ‘The Fox jumped over the parson’s gate,’ by the former, and the song, ‘Rest thee, babe,’ by the latter, were greatly admired. At one of the rehearsals of this piece Tokely, who acted the character of Dirk Hatterick, smelling very offensively of liquor (according to custom), Fawcett, the stage-manager, who is not remarkable for the gentleness of his manners, said to him rather tartly, “For God’s sake, Tokely, leave off that detestable habit of drinking spirits in the morning! If you must enjoy your glass, take it after dinner, and then it won’t do you so much injury.” Tokely, who appeared to feel the force of the rebuke, promised to abstain in future; but before a week had elapsed he came to an early rehearsal, at ten o’clock in the morning, smelling of liquor more offensively than ever. Fawcett having noticed this again, said to him, “I see, Tokely, you have not taken my advice.”—“O yes, I have,” replied Tokely, “for I’ve had my dinner!” This incorrigibly intemperate man, but clever actor, some time after fell down in a fit of apoplexy, and expired. The vice of drinking to excess was as prevalent fifty years ago in England as in Germany, and then and for many years afterwards, from a mistaken hospitality, a gentleman in a

party was as sure to experience inebriation as a faded beauty neglect. But although these Bacchanalian orgies are prodigiously diminished, yet (notwithstanding their baneful effects) they still boast many votaries. A Member of Parliament, justly celebrated as a brilliant wit, a commanding orator, and a refined writer, was so enslaved by that unseemly habit, that he and his son, some few years ago, dining at a tavern in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, had, when they departed in the evening, drank nine bottles of various sorts of wine! But whether they had been fairly divided betwixt the father and son, I know not. The same Member of Parliament, who had failed attending the dinner party of an intimate friend of mine, being afterwards informed by that gentleman that his absence had been much regretted, and that some very choice wine had been procured purposely for him, replied, “I am sorry you gave yourself that trouble, as bad wine does as well for me as good, for I can’t taste either!”

The late Honourable Frank North, (afterwards Earl of Guilford,) second son of Lord North, many years premier of England, was a *bon vivant*, and had, through his *vinous* excesses, had an illness which brought him near death’s door. He however recovered, notwithstanding he had been

attended by three physicians. After he had arrived at a certain stage of convalescence he was advised to take the benefit of the Bath waters, with a strict injunction not to exceed two glasses of wine after dinner, which he for a short time with great difficulty adhered to. Having, however, made a party to dine at the famed Bush Tavern in Bristol, as soon as he and his friends had arrived there and had ordered dinner, Mr. North, thinking the glasses ranged on the side-board too small, asked the landlord if he had not got larger ones. Mine host replied that he had some which would hold a pint, and that he had one old-fashioned glass which would contain a bottle ! “ Ah ! ” said Mr. North, “ bring that for me, for as my physician limits me to two glasses only, it will answer my purpose admirably ! ”

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 4th of June with a grand gala, in honour of His Majesty’s birthday. In the concert Mr. C. Taylor sang, for the first time, a new ‘laughing song’ composed by me, which was loudly applauded and encored. After the gardens were closed, dining with Mr. Barret, the proprietor of them, the Rev. Mr. Barret, brother to the former, said to me in the presence of the party, “ Mr. Parke, you have done for Vauxhall Gardens that which no former composer had accomplished.” On my requesting

him to explain, he added, “ You have composed a song for Vauxhall Gardens,—I mean the laughing song,—which was not only sung, but encored every night during a season ! ” At the end of the concert Madame Sachi, from Paris, who had lately made her first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre, ascended a half perpendicular tight-rope amidst the blazing fireworks, to the height of two hundred feet, and back again, to the admiration of the audience. This gala was attended by upwards of five thousand persons ; but the great night of the season was, as usual, on the Prince Regent’s birthday, the following 12th of August, when the audience exceeded fourteen thousand. On that occasion the concert consisted of selections from those great masters, Handel, Haydn, Arne, Beethoven, Shield, &c. ; and amongst the best songs was ‘ The Prince and old England for ever,’ well sung by Dignum, and enthusiastically encored.

The Lyceum Theatre (Strand) having been recently destroyed by fire, and rebuilt on a larger scale, opened on the 15th of June, under the title of ‘ The English Opera House,’ with the opera of ‘ Up all Night, or, The Smugglers’ Cave,’ under the direction of its proprietor, Mr. Arnold, son of the late celebrated composer, Dr. Arnold. At Covent Garden Theatre a new opera in three acts, called ‘ The Slave,’ written by Morton, was

produced on the 12th of November. The music was by Bishop. In this agreeable piece Miss Stephens, in the air 'Sons of freedom,' was deservedly encored. Duruset had a song in honour of the battle of Waterloo. The words ascribed to our great captain, 'Up lads and at them,' however inspiring on the field, made little impression in the theatre, owing probably to the degraded light in which the author (to enhance his hero, Gambia,) has placed the character of a British officer who sings it. The music is happily varied, pleasing, and appropriate.

1817.

The performers at the King's Theatre this season, with the exception of Madame Fodor and Naldi, were all new. At the head of them were Madame Camporese, Madame Pasta, and Signor Crevelli. The last three made their first appearance on the 11th of January, in Cimarosa's grand serious opera called 'Penelope,' which was the first time of its being performed in England. Madame Camporese's voice was powerful and clear, and she sang with taste and feeling. The voice of Madame Pasta was finely regulated and flexible, and her style was full of expression. Crevelli's was a tenor voice of considerable power, with an extensive falsetto. They all met with a

most flattering reception. Mozart's opera 'Le Nozze di Figaro' was performed for the first time on the 2nd of February, in which Signor Ambrogetti appeared as the Count with great success. Fodor was the Countess; Camporese, Susanna; Pasta, the Page, and Naldi, Figaro. They all performed admirably, and the opera was vehemently applauded till the curtain fell. The great success of this opera induced the manager to bring forward Mozart's 'Don Giovanni,' which was performed for the first time on the 12th of April, by the same performers, with equal success. The beautiful air in the second act, sung by Madame Fodor, was tumultuously encored. The music of both these operas of Mozart deserves all possible praise.

The concert of Ancient Music, and the Philharmonic concert, opened as usual at Hanover Square and the Argyll Rooms; but the Vocal concert (owing to the subscriptions having failed) was discontinued, "till more favourable circumstances should enable the proprietors to resume them."

There was not any novelty at the oratorios this season.

Seeing some beautiful lines in the Morning Post newspaper, in the early part of this year, headed 'The Shamrock,' I composed some music to them as a song. A short time afterwards Dig-

num, the well-known singer, called on me, and seeing the manuscript on the piano-forte, requested I would permit him to sing it at the approaching annual dinner in celebration of St. Patrick, on the 17th of March. Having my consent, he sung it, and it was received in the most favorable manner. He afterwards suggested to me the idea of publishing it; adding, that he was convinced that distinguished statesman, Lord Castlereagh, who had filled the chair on that occasion, would consider it a compliment if I wrote to request his permission to dedicate it to him. I did so, and was favoured with the answer, of which the following is a copy:

“ St. James’s Square,
“ March 21st, 1817:

“ Lord Castlereagh presents his compliments to Mr. Parke, and thanks him for his intention to dedicate the inclosed song to him as president at the late dinner on St. Patrick’s day.

CASTLEREAGH.

“ To W. Parke, Esq.
“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.”

I had scarcely published this song, and sent a copy of it to his lordship, when, to my great surprise and disappointment, I discovered that the poetry formed a part of Mr. Moore’s celebrated work called ‘ Irish Melodies:’ therefore, to

avoid the commission of an act of indelicacy towards the distinguished author, and of injustice to the publisher of that work, I suppressed it altogether.

The popularity of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' induced the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre to bring it out in an English form. It was brought out on the 20th of May. The principal parts were admirably sustained by Sinclair, Durusset, and Miss Stephens, who, though not equal to Madame Fodor, was encored in the charming air in the second act. The performance of Mozart's music by the theatrical band of that day (led by Ware) would have done honour to the Opera House.

Our old friend Michael Kelly, who had long been a martyr to the gout, died at Ramsgate on the 15th of October, 1816. He was born in the year 1762, in Dublin, where his father carried on the trade of a wine-merchant. Rauzzini, on going to Ireland, gave him lessons in singing at an early age, and at sixteen years old he was sent to Naples, where he was noticed by Sir William Hamilton, the British minister at that court. He studied under the great master, Aprili, who procured for him an engagement at Leghorn. Having performed at several of the Italian theatres, he at length travelled to Germany, and at Vienna he was one of the original singers in the 'Nozze di

Figaro' of Mozart. In 1787 he made his first appearance in London, in the opera of 'Lionel and Clarissa,' at Drury Lane Theatre, and was some time afterwards appointed director of the music, and composer to that theatre. Kelly, it is said, during his long engagement at Drury Lane, composed sixty different pieces for that and other theatres. He was also for many years director of the music at the King's Theatre in the Hay-market. Kelly was a judicious compiler, and introduced into his operas many fine compositions of the Italian masters. He was, however, but little acquainted with harmony, and I had his own word for this; for in the year 1803, he candidly told me in the garden of Watson, the proprietor of the theatre at Cheltenham, (then a promenade for the fashionables,) that he merely wrote the melodies, and that the old Italian, Mazzanti, did the rest. To corroborate the previous statement, it need only be observed that the late Dr. A—d informed me that Kelly, after he had composed several of his operas, called on him, and asked him how long it would take to learn thorough bass. Kelly's pieces were, notwithstanding, generally successful, and I was credibly informed that the sale of his music to 'Blue Beard,' for a considerable time produced for Corri, its publisher, a profit of forty guineas per week.

Kelly, a short time before his death, published a literary work in two volumes octavo, intitled 'The Reminiscences of Michael Kelly,' which was read by many with much interest.

Vauxhall Gardens, at their opening on the 4th of June, presented a scene of uncommon splendour. Madame Sachi danced for the first time, most gracefully, on the *corde volante*, at the end of the first act, and at the end of the concert made her fearful ascent amidst general applause. Hook's organ concerto was admirably performed.

Whilst walking with Hook one day in the Strand, we were impeded in crossing the road from Norfolk Street to the opposite side of the way by a hackney chariot, whose number was the unit one. The carriage being extremely clean and neat, and in good preservation, particularly claimed my notice, and induced me to observe to Hook as it passed, that it appeared to be almost as good as new ; adding, "It has been well taken care of."—"There is nothing extraordinary in that," said Hook, "for every body takes care of number one!"

By the sudden death of Sir William Parsons, Mus. Doc., the musical profession was deprived of one of its most distinguished members. This event was, I believe, sincerely regretted by all who knew him. Sir William was appointed mas-

ter of the King's band, and composer of the odes, and of the minuets danced at court on the King and Queen's birthdays, in the year 1787 ; and as a composer displayed considerable ability. As the origin of the King's band may not be generally known, I will give a brief account of it. The King's band was instituted soon after the restoration, by Charles the Second, in imitation of that which had been founded in France by Louis the Fourteenth. It consists of twenty-four musicians, attached to the King's household. The salary of each is forty pounds a year, and the wardrobe fees that they receive in lieu of clothes makes it up to fifty. The salary of the master of the band is two hundred pounds if he composes the odes only, and three hundred if he composes the odes and minuets. This establishment gave birth to the well-known burlesque song, 'Four and twenty fidlers all in a row.' It has by some been considered a grievance that a former Lord Chamberlain gave the places frequently to noblemen's butlers and valets, nay, in one instance even to a huntsman ! But if the musical professors considered the appointment of the latter, who was a sort of horn player, derogatory to their art, the same nobleman amply soothed their wounded feelings by filling up a following vacancy with an alderman !—a right worshipful of the

corporation of H—d. Sir William Parsons was in the commission of the peace, and occupied a seat many years on the magisterial bench in Bow Street. He was a man of prepossessing and gentlemanly manners, and though a *bon vivant*, lived to a good age, which shows that there are some soils of animate, as well as of inanimate earth, which thrive best by being frequently moistened. The popular composer, Mr. Shield, succeeded to Sir William Parsons as master of the King's band and composer of the odes, and Mr. Kramer as composer of the minuets.

That elegant and popular composer, Paesiello, died in the year 1816. In the year 1745 (then a boy of ten years of age) Paesiello studied in the *conservatorio* at Naples, under the celebrated Durante; and in 1763 he composed an opera for the theatre of Bologna. In 1766 he went to Russia, and entered into the service of the Empress Catherine, with a salary of four thousand rubles. Paesiello afterwards composed for several of the continental sovereigns, and at length became composer to the First Consul of France. After remaining in Paris upwards of two years he returned to Italy, where Bonaparte sent him the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

1818.

The King's Theatre, which had not this season the aid of Madame Camporese or Madame Pasta, owing to their prior engagements on the continent, opened on the 10th of January with Paer's serious opera, 'Griselda,' in which Signora Corri, who appeared for the first time, and Madame Fodor, performed with great effect, and were encored in the admired duet, 'Veder vuol' brama.' Rossini's celebrated comic opera, 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia,' was performed for the first time in England on the 10th of March. In this opera Signor Garcia made his first appearance. His tenor voice was clear, sonorous, and flexible, and his acting excellent. The music of this opera exhibits science in a pleasing form, and much beautiful melody; and the effect of the accompaniments (the wind instruments in particular) is striking. It went off with unbounded applause.

The oratorios commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 30th of January, with a selection (called by the Italians a *pasticcio*) from 'The Messiah' and the 'Mount of Olives.' At the end of the first part Mr. Linley played a concerto on the violoncello with great ability. The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre began on Friday the 16th of February, with a grand selection, in which Signora Corri, Miss Stephens and Mr. Braham

sang with effect, and gave great satisfaction. At the end of the second part Mr. Drouet, from Paris, played 'God save the King,' with variations on the flute. This gentleman's style of playing that popular air made rather an unfavourable impression on my ear ; it wanted both grace and expression. But when he executed his variations, I was not only surprised, but highly gratified with his extraordinary execution and articulation. Though Mr. Drouet displayed such uncommon rapidity of tongue, (for that was his forte,) I was convinced, from subsequent observation, that he was not equally impressive in adagio playing, which is the test of excellence. In fact he had studied rapidity of tongue only, which is the minor part of the art, and consequently he is unable to play slow music with proper effect. He reminded me of a musician I once knew, who, having for some years practised tipling, could not walk in a straight line, but could run to a given point with as little deviation as an arrow.

The Vocal concert, which was last year discontinued, was this season revived, and commenced at Hanover Square on the 6th of March. The singers were Madame Fodor, Signora Corri, Mr. Bartleman, &c. ; Mr. Weichsell led the band, and Mr. Greatorex was the conductor. The Vocal concert was established by Messrs. Harrison and

the elder Knyvett, in the year 1792, at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St. James's Square, for the performance of vocal music only, viz. canzonets, madrigals, glees, and *serious glees*: I suppose we shall hereafter have *lively dirges*. Many new pieces of these descriptions were composed expressly for the undertaking by the admired composers in that line, S. Webbe, Doctor Calcott, — Danby, and R. T. Stevens. This species of music, at the time this concert was instituted, was very fashionable, and was sung there so extremely *sotto voce*, that it was aptly termed whispering. It was however sung by first-rate singers, Harrison, Knyvett, &c., occasionally assisted by that surprising singer, Mrs. Billington, who, instead of taking a part in the old harmonised ballad, 'O Nanny, wilt thou gang wi' me,' should have gratified the auditors with one of her fascinating 'bravuras.' To keep a singer of her splendid powers in a situation so subordinate, was like cooping an eagle to prevent its soaring to the skies. This concert beginning to decline, the proprietors, in the year 1801, had found it necessary to introduce instrumental performances, which acting as a stimulus, urged it on effectively. In the year 1804 it was removed to the Hanover Square Rooms; but the thirst on the part of the subscribers for expensive novelty still in-

creasing, without adding to the amount of the subscription, the proprietors this year were induced to suspend an undertaking which had called forth the talents of several popular composers, and had made known to the public many of their best productions.

At the Theatre Royal Covent Garden a new opera, called 'Zuma,' written by T. Dibdin, was brought out on the 1st of February. The music was by Messrs. Braham and Bishop. "In this piece," says a critic, "the songs given by Miss Stephens and Braham were greatly applauded. In the third act Braham had a song adapted to the 'Marcellois Hymn.' He sang it with great animation, and the audience had scarcely time to encore it before he eagerly returned to sing it again. He was applauded when he had finished it the second time; but though no new call was made, he, after a moment's pause, came to sing it a third time. Cries of 'Off, off,' and 'No, no,' were heard from all parts of the theatre; and the attempt, though persevered in, was quite ineffectual, for his voice was drowned in the tumult that prevailed." Charles Bannister, of theatric memory, used to call those singers who came back to a slight encore *willing actors*. If he was now living, I should be curious to know by what adjective he would distinguish a per-

former who encores himself. At the same theatre a new opera, the dramatic incidents of which were taken from Sir Walter Scott's 'Rob Roy,' was produced on the 12th of March. The music, composed and compiled by Davy, is, with a few exceptions, selected from the most popular Scotch airs. The overture, containing a brilliant solo and *cadenza* for the oboe, which were played by me, displayed science and taste, and was, together with the whole of the piece, received with universal approbation. Scotch airs, when well harmonised, appear at all times to afford great satisfaction in our English theatres, and the talents of several excellent composers have been exerted to make them more acceptable to the public. Among the most successful are Haydn and Shield, those of the former being remarkable for science, and the latter for simplicity. Scotch songs were first introduced south of the Tweed above a century ago, by Mr. Thomson, who published a collection of them in London by means of a large subscription, in February, 1722. They were generally admired, and shortly afterwards began to be sung at our concerts, &c.

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 8th of June, with a gala in honour of his Majesty's birthday. In the concert Mrs. Bland sang a new song composed by me, which was echoed in a distant

part of the gardens by the bugle-horn. It was loudly applauded and universally encored. The organ concerto by Mr. Hook, and the oboe concerto by me, (in which I for the first time played variations on ‘The Maid of Lodi,’) were flatteringly received. Madame Sachi, by her ascent on the tight-rope, astonished one half of the audience and terrified the other.

Among the greatest singers that England has produced, and whom I have heard, were Mrs. Sheridan (late Miss Linley), Miss Maria Linley (her youngest sister), Mrs. Weichsell (mother of Mrs. Billington), Mrs. Kennedy, Signora Storace, Mrs. Billington, Miss George (afterwards Lady Oldmixon), Miss Harrop, Miss Pool (afterwards Mrs. Dickons), Miss Mahon (afterwards Mrs. Second), Miss Parke (afterwards Mrs. Beardmore), Miss Paton, Mrs. Salmon, &c. The first of these ladies, Mrs. Sheridan, I heard in the year 1777, at a concert given by her husband, at his house in Orchard Street, Portman Square, at which were assembled a host of the first nobility and gentry of England. On that occasion she sang the old ballad, ‘Ellen Aroon,’ to the original Irish words, with such feeling and expression, as to impress her hearers, even those unacquainted with the language, fully with the sentiment of it. Mr. Sheridan had, during the preceding year,

1776, became the principal patentee of Drury Lane Theatre, on the retirement of Garrick, the English Roscius. Garrick, after he had retired retained his private box in that theatre, and frequently appeared in it with his wife to witness the performances ; but when his own afterpiece, called ‘The Jubilee,’ was acted, in which there was a pointed allusion to himself, he invariably sat in the orchestra. As soon as Garrick appeared there all eyes were directed towards him, the actors being for a while forgotten. While the compliment to himself was delivering the little man, with much apparent modesty, bent forwards, held his head a little down, and smiled, saying, as it were, “Oh, this is too much !” though he had written it himself ; and when the gaze and admiration of the audience had subsided, he coolly retired to his box for the remainder of the evening. This perhaps was feeling the pulse of popular opinion ; but if it was vanity, as some denominated it, it was justifiable ; for vanity begets emulation, and emulation is a lesser kind of ambition, which excites to enterprises “of great pith and moment.” Mr. Sheridan married that accomplished and extraordinary singer, Miss Linley, in the year 1773. At that period he had no establishment, but was endowed, as it were, with a prescience, by which he marked out his line of march to

future greatness. From this line he could never be induced to swerve ; a proof of which is to be found in his having determined that his wife should never sing for hire, and consequently refusing the offer of 1000*l.* for her to sing at twelve concerts to be given at the Pantheon. He would not even permit her attendance at the music parties of Queen Charlotte, consort of George the Third. Two years after his marriage (in 1775) his famous comic opera ‘*The Duenna*’ was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, which had an unprecedented run. In truth, no opera before it, Gay’s Beggar’s Opera not excepted, nor any subsequent one, ever became so popular. Musical copyright at that time not being so well defined as it is now, an adventurer opened a shop in Long Acre for the sale of a pirated edition of the songs in ‘*The Duenna*,’ executed on a cheap plan. These were sold at so low a price as fourpence each ; and the demand for them was so great, that I have seen the door besieged by a crowd of purchasers from morning till night ; and what with the rapidity of the sale and the law’s delay, the pirate had gained a considerable sum before he could be restrained. That Sheridan (who died in 1816) was a man of great and varied talents is universally admitted ; and it may be justly observed, that there have been few instances of an

individual being endowed in so extraordinary a degree with the faculties, *tria juncta in uno*, of a wit, a dramatist, and an orator.

Rossini's operas having become highly fashionable, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre produced, on the 12th of October, 'The Barber of Seville,' with part of Rossini's music. In this piece Mrs. Dickons made here first appearance after her return from the continent. In the character of Rosina she delighted the audience, both as a singer and an actress, particularly in the song 'An old man would be wooing,' introduced in the singing lesson of the second act, admirably accompanied by herself on the piano-forte, which was universally encored. The overture by Bishop, and the whole of the music, went off with great *éclat*.

1819.

At the King's Theatre, which opened on the 26th of January, Rossini's comic opera, 'L'Italiana Algieri,' was performed for the first time in England. In this opera Madame Georgia Bellochi and Signor Placci made their first appearance. Madame Bellochi sang with great power of voice, skill, and taste, and Signor Placci's rich mellow baritone voice gave general satisfaction. Madame Bellochi, whose singing was greatly admired, appeared on the 17th of April as Rosina, in Rossini's

‘Barbiere di Seviglia,’ and sang and acted with great effect. Placci was an excellent Figaro, and Ambrogetti and Garcia, as Don Bartolo and Il Conte d’Almaviva, were admirable. On the 25th of May Mozart’s grand romantic opera, called ‘Il Flauto Magico,’ was performed for the first time at this theatre. The music of this opera is one of the noblest works of Mozart. It was composed by him during his last illness, and was first performed at Vienna with enthusiastic applause: the beauty of the melodies and the richness of the orchestral accompaniments cannot be exceeded. It has been said by some of the Italian masters that the instrumental parts in Mozart’s operas are too predominant, and that they thereby reduce the importance of the singer. Gretry, speaking of the merits of Mozart and Cimarosa, said, “Mozart places the statue in the orchestra and the pedestal on the stage, whilst Cimarosa places the statue on the stage and the pedestal in the orchestra.”

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced on Friday, the 26th of February, with a grand selection, in which Madame Bellochi sang two Italian airs with great taste and brilliancy: she was loudly applauded. W. Ware was leader, W. T. Parke principal oboe; and S. Wesley conductor. The Drury Lane oratorios commenced

for the six Wednesdays during Lent on the 3d of March with a selection. Mrs. Salmon displayed her fine voice with great effect in the Italian air ‘ *Sventurata*,’ which was admirably accompanied on the flute by Mr. Nicholson. Madame Bellochi, who sang at both oratorios, in Rossini’s elegant cavatina, ‘ *Di piacer*,’ was greatly applauded.

The concert of ancient music commenced at Hanover Square on the 20th of February. This concert, which was first established at the suggestion of the Earl of Sandwich, in the year 1776, is a select subscription concert, under the management of directors, generally noblemen, who alternately preside for the evening. It consists of twelve performances, on Wednesday evenings, beginning generally in February, and as many rehearsals on the preceding Monday mornings. This concert, in accordance with its title, is for the exclusive performance of the old music; therefore the directors, who wish their music, like their wine, to be of a certain age, permit none to be performed that has not attained the age of twenty-five years. This concert was first patronised by his Majesty George the Third, in the year 1785, and was held in Tottenham Street. In the year 1804 the directors removed it to the Hanover Square Rooms, where it is still held; and after having been established more than half a

century, is as excellent and as much attended as ever. It ought not to be forgotten that the directors of the concert of ancient music have, through their liberal patronage, greatly contributed to the advance made by native musical talent in England. Six concerts were this season given at the London Tavern, called 'The London concerts,' conducted by Sir G. Smart. The singers engaged from the west to sing in the east were, Mrs. Dickons, Mrs. Salmon, Miss Stephens, and Mr. Braham. These excellent performers were not aware perhaps that they were liable to a civic action, called a Pros, for singing in the city of London without having previously taken up their freedom.

That great and fascinating singer, Mrs. Billington, died at her estate of St. Artien, near Venice, in 1818, after an illness of a few days. She was a true musical genius, and, as Miss Weichsell, played concertos on the piano-forte admirably at the age of ten years. This talent, the foundation of all good singing, afforded her that degree of knowledge which afterwards, aided by vocal instruction, enabled her to soar with impunity into the regions of fancy, and ultimately conducted her to the acmé of her profession. Her excellence, however, was not attained without vast application; and, fortunately for her, she had a

father who took especial care that her studies were unremitted. This gentleman, Mr. Weichsell, a clarionet player of eminence at the King's Theatre, possessed an extremely irritable temper, and was a great epicure. He would occasionally supersede the labours of his cook, and pass a whole day in preparing his favourite dish, rump-steaks, for the stewing-pan; and after the delicious viand had been placed on the dinner table, together with early green peas of high price, if it happened that the sauce was not exactly to his liking, he has been known to throw rump-steaks and green peas and all out of the window, whilst his wife and children thought themselves fortunate in not being thrown after them. At an early age Miss Weichsell married Mr. Billington, a genteel young man, and an excellent double-bass player of Drury Lane Theatre; and being shortly afterwards engaged to perform at the Theatre Royal in Dublin, she repaired thither, attended by her husband, and was flatteringly received. In the year 1786 she came to England, and made her first appearance at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in the character of Rosetta, in the comic opera of 'Love in a Village,' with unbounded applause. The shining talent of Mrs. Billington became so popular that she was also engaged at the concert of Ancient Music, which was attended

by their Majesties ; the professional concert, the first concert in Europe ; the oratorios, &c. ; till the year 1793, when she went to Italy, where she remained till 1801, performing with great applause in the Italian theatres. She afterwards returned to England, and made a very lucrative engagement for the season, to perform alternately at Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres, which she did to crowded houses amidst enthusiastic applause. In 1802 she was engaged at the King's Theatre in the Hay Market, and performed there with the utmost success till the end of the operatic season of 1806. It is a curious fact that no opera of Mozart was performed on the Italian stage in London till that year, when Mrs. Billington produced his ‘Clemenza di Tito’ for her benefit at the King's Theatre. Thus the high distinction of making known the greatest musical genius of the age to the British public was reserved for an English female. Mrs. Billington afterwards gave subscription concerts at Willis's Rooms ; and in the year 1811 performed, for the last time, in a concert at the Opera House, for the benefit of her brother, Mr. Weichsell, leader of the band at the King's Theatre. On taking leave of the audience on that occasion she was greeted with universal and continued applause. Mr. Billington having died suddenly in Italy of apoplexy, in May 1794,

at the house of the Bishop of Winchester, whilst taking up his hat to attend his wife to the theatre San Carlos in Naples, where she was performing with great *éclat*, she in the year 1798 married M. Felisenti, an officer attached to the army of Bonaparte, who could not, of course, reside with her in England but during the short peace of 1802, and after the permanent one of 1814. I was introduced by Mrs. Billington to M. Felisenti. He was a good-looking and gentlemanly young man, of a lively disposition and tolerable good sense, though it was said that when he and his wife differed in an argument, he had a *striking* mode of convincing her of her error. Mrs. Billington, while in London, lived on terms of great intimacy with a counsellor of eminence and his family, who frequently partook of the hospitalities of her table ; and having during those parties, when the conversation took that turn, asked him some common questions on law, out of mere curiosity, the counsellor (whose affairs afterwards were much deranged) sent her in a bill to the amount of 300*l.* for consultations ! This she showed to her solicitor, who informed her that though a counsellor could not legally make out a bill; yet he would advise her, the man being in great distress, to make him a present of a 100*l.* and to get rid of him. It would have been a just retort if Mrs. Billington

had adopted the mode of the country gentleman, who, it is said, having experienced a similar extortion from an attorney he had entertained, sent him in a bill for dinners and wine as a set-off. But if she had, it might have been useless, as the counsellor, perhaps, in imitation of the country attorney, would have parried this by threatening to indict her for selling wine without a license. Mrs. Billington, with whom I had for many years lived on terms of intimacy, took a parting dinner at my house before she set out for Italy, where death, alike insensible to beauty and to merit, terminated her pleasures and her cares in the fiftieth year of her age.

At the Covent Garden Theatre 'The Marriage of Figaro,' with Mozart's music, was for the first time performed on the 11th of March, under the direction of Mr. Bishop. Mrs. Dickons, as the Countess, and Miss Stephens, as Susannah, sang the charming music of this opera delightfully, and in the admired letter duet, the union of their fine voices, and their tasteful style of singing, called forth a general and vehement encore. The music of this opera was generally applauded throughout.

 It is gratifying to observe the advance music has made in this country during the last fifty years, particularly in our English theatres, where now it is listened to with attention, and its beauties felt

and applauded, even by those in the galleries, who formerly were so coarse in their manners, that the respectable part of the audience were stunned with their continued and vociferous calls of 'Roast beef' and 'Play up, Nosey!' The latter rude cry originated at Drury Lane Theatre in Garrick's time, and was directed to Mr. Cervetto, father to the celebrated violoncello player of that name. This gentleman, an Italian, was a very old man, of a spare habit, and had a remarkably prominent Roman nose. As the theatres were then not more than half the size of the present ones, and as his high seat in the orchestra presented a view of him, while playing, *en profile*, the 'gods' saluted him with the nickname of 'Nosey!' which continued to be called in both theatres for many years after his death, at the age of 103 years. A curious circumstance occurred to Mr. Cervetto, related by himself, which shows the hardened nature of culprits at that period. As he was returning through Oxford Street, then called Tyburn Road, on a day of execution, from his morning ride, he passed the cart in which were two malefactors proceeding to Tyburn to be hanged; one of them, who, as well as his companion, held a prayer-book in his hand, suddenly started, and loudly exclaimed to

his companion, “ D—n my eyes, Jack, there’s old Nosey !”

On the 11th of December Shakspeare’s ‘Comedy of Errors’ was brought out as an opera at Covent Garden Theatre. The poetry consisted of songs and sonnets from the author’s own works. The music was composed and compiled by Bishop. Miss Stephens and Miss M. Tree sang the music assigned to their respective parts admirably. In the duet, ‘ Tell me where is fancy bred,’ they elicited enthusiastic applause and an encore. The overture and the music afforded general satisfaction.

The King’s Theatre commenced for the season on the 18th of December with Mozart’s comic opera, ‘ Le Nozze di Figaro,’ in which Madame Bellochi sang admirably. The house that night was remarkably thin ; indeed the most numerous part of the audience were the *forcers*, viz. those dependants of the principal singers who are admitted with orders to set the applause and the encores going. These people, however, are sometimes necessary, as the following fact will show : At Covent Garden Theatre, some few years back, John Kemble, then stage-manager, had got up one of the Roman plays of Shakspeare, the first representation of which he came into the orchestra

to witness, and sat next to me. Although the language was beautiful, and admirably delivered, yet the apathy of the audience was such, that the actors could not obtain a sign of approbation. This, he observed, was intolerable ; therefore to a succeeding speech he gently tapped his stick on the floor, which was followed by the hands of a few of the audience. This he repeated occasionally, increasing the force each time, till the audience at length gave the actors loud and general applause. “ There, Mr. Parke,” said he to me, “ you see the use of a *forcer*.”

1820.

At the King’s Theatre Mozart’s ‘ Nozze di Figaro’ was performed on the 11th of January, and on Saturday the 18th, Rossini’s popular opera ‘ La Cenerentola’ (Cinderella) was brought out. In this opera Signor Torri appeared for the first time. He displayed a sweet and flexible tenor voice, and sang with judgment. Madame Bellochi produced for her benefit, on the 4th of May, Rossini’s serious opera, ‘ Tancredi,’ in which she sang the popular cavatina, ‘ Di tanti palpiti,’ in a finished style, and was vehemently encored. The music of this opera has been celebrated in every part of the continent. Madame Montano made her first appearance on the 27th of June in

Paer's celebrated opera 'L' Agnese.' Her voice was a contr' alto (counter tenor). She sang with feeling and considerable ability.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced on Friday the 18th of February, with a grand selection from the works of Handel, and an Epicedeum, in memory of his late Majesty George the Third, who, to the universal grief of his people, departed this life on the 29th of January. They began on the same evening at Drury Lane Theatre, with sacred and secular music, relieved with odes, recited by Mrs. Glover and Mr. Elliston. The odes, in some of the passages which alluded to the loss of our revered Sovereign drew forth many a heart-felt sigh, and started many a tear of affection.

The concert of ancient music commenced at Hanover Square on the 6th of March. The Archbishop of York was director. On that evening the royal box was hung with black. Miss Stephens sang, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and Mr. Bartleman, 'Tears such as tender fathers shed,' with great pathos. Mr. F. Cramer was leader, and Mr. Greatorex conductor. The vocal concert began at the same rooms on the 10th of March. Mr. F. Cramer was leader, and Mr. Greatorex conductor of this concert also. The leader of an orchestra was formerly considered

the conductor, (leader and conductor being synonymous terms,) but latterly the fashion crept in of having a leader and a conductor also, and the practice has at length become so familiar, that no apparent jealousy exists between them, though the conductor evidently considers himself the best man of the two, feeling perhaps that degree of superiority over the leader which the physician does over the apothecary. This innovation, however, at first gave considerable uneasiness to the leader; but I suppose he was appeased by the conductor in the same way as Trinculo appeases Stephano in the ‘Tempest,’ by saying to him; “You shall be king, and I’ll be viceroy over you.”

That extraordinary singer of former days, Madame Mara, who had passed the last eighteen years in Russia, and who had lately arrived in England, gave a concert at the King’s Theatre, on the 6th of March, which highly excited the curiosity of the musical public. On that occasion she sang some of her best airs; and though her powers were greatly inferior to what they were in her zenith, yet the same pure taste pervaded her performance. Whether vanity or interest stimulated Mara at her time of life to that undertaking, it would be difficult to determine; but whichever had the ascendancy, her reign was short; for, by singing one night afterwards at the vocal concert,

the veil which had obscured her judgment was removed, and she retired to enjoy in private life those comforts which her rare talent had procured for her.

Twenty years ago Mr. Shield, the composer, who was rather a *bon vivant*, whilst dining at the celebrated Beef-steak Club, under the piazza of Covent Garden, experienced an attack resembling apoplexy. He soon recovered, however, and was strongly urged to lose some blood by cupping, which he positively refused. Some days after that occurrence Shield was dining with me, and, as an old friend, I asked him why he had so great an aversion to cupping? He replied, “I dislike being bled, because I think it may one day save my life.”—“That is,” said I, “you will wait for an attack, rather than endeavour to avert it!” His answer somewhat surprised me; for, independently of his good sense, he had previously told me that his father died of apoplexy immediately after having eaten an apple, at the age of thirty-five years. Shield, who like many others had some peculiarities of his own, placed a great reliance on the virtues of simples, and almost every day since his illness peregrinated to the herb shops in Covent Garden Market to purchase them. One day returning from thence with his pockets stuffed, he was overtaken by his friend

and neighbour, Dr. Myers, near his own door in Berner's Street. The doctor asked him how he felt himself, to which Shield replied, that he had lately been very unwell. "What has been the matter with you?" said the doctor. "I have had a giddiness in my head," answered Shield. The doctor advised him to get cupped, as that would remove it. "Yes," said Shield, "but I am better now."—"That," said the doctor, "is an additional reason for it. People who require it, should be cupped when they are well, and not wait till they are otherwise; for then it may be of no use to them." Shield, however, was his own physician, and he took a glass of decoction in the morning, and a bottle of wine after dinner; and yet he enjoyed good health for many years afterwards! The practice of cupping, which has widely extended during the last forty years, has no doubt proved highly advantageous to society, and the more generally it is adopted the more human life will be preserved. That there are many sanguine habits, which naturally generate a superabundance of blood, is certain; and that there are an infinitely greater number of persons who, by high living and drinking too much wine, &c. create an artificial abundance of it, is no less true. To prove this I shall advert to the case of a lady of my acquaintance, who

found it necessary to be cupped frequently ; but who, having at length determined to abstain from wine altogether, has not had occasion to undergo the operation for several years, and is now in excellent health. This proves that those who are incapable of adhering to the required regimen should watch the affections of the head, and when assailed by vertigos, have immediate recourse to the glasses,—I of course mean those of the copper ; with this assurance, that if they happen to have a little fever on them, cupping will not on that account prove injurious. That some medical practitioners oppose this system is well known, preferring the more roundabout and less certain mode of restoring their patients, a fatal instance of which occurred in the family of a gentleman I knew. About twenty years ago, Mrs. Pope, the young and favourite actress of Covent Garden Theatre, was seized with a fit of apoplexy whilst performing on the stage in one of her principal characters, from which she was, after some time, sufficiently recovered to be conveyed home. Two medical gentlemen were then called in, one of whom proposed cupping, and the other opposed it. The anti-cupper, however, carried his point, and the patient at length appeared to be recovered. In a few days afterwards the lady had a female friend with her to

take tea, who was to accompany her to the Italian Opera ; but, whilst raising the cup to her lips, she gave a horrific shriek, exclaiming, “ I’m shot through the head !” and immediately after expired !

At Covent Garden Theatre a new musical play, called ‘ Ivanhoe,’ taken from Sir Walter Scott’s novel, was produced on the 2nd of March. The music of this piece was judiciously arranged by Mr. Parry. The song, ‘ The lullaby,’ sung by Miss Stephens, was much admired, as was the duet by her and Duruset, to the tune of ‘ Erin go Bragh.’

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 7th of June, with a gala of the most superb description. In my oboe concerto I introduced ‘ God save the King’ with variations, which I repeated with great success every night during that season. After the concert Madame Sachi, her last season, made her ascent amidst the fireworks. This intrepid lady, whilst making a similar ascent at the Tivoli Gardens near Paris, had a foot-slip, which made her fall from the rope, and must have proved fatal, had it not been for the presence of mind evinced by a party of British officers, who instantly locked their arms together, and received her on them unhurt !

Shakspeare’s ‘ Twelfth Night’ was performed

for the first time at Covent Garden Theatre as an opera on the 8th of November. The poetry of the songs, &c. was taken from the works of the immortal bard, and the music was composed and selected from Ravenscroft, Winter, Sir John Stevenson, &c. by Bishop. In this piece the principal part of the music was assigned to Miss M. Tree as Viola, and Miss Greene as Olivia. The former not only sang with great effect, but acted the part admirably ; and her song ‘ Bid me discourse,’ was unanimously encored. The latter sang the air, ‘ In bowers of laurel trimly dight,’ with much power and sweetness. This music is highly creditable to the taste and judgment of Mr. Bishop.

1821.

Owing to some derangement in the affairs of the King’s Theatre, it did not open till the 10th of March, when Rossini’s new opera, called ‘ *La Gazza Ladra*,’ taken from the *Maid and the Magpie*, was performed for the first time in England. In this opera Madame Camporese appeared for the first time since 1817, as *Annette*. She still possessed her former richness of voice, taste, and execution, and was greatly applauded. The music is in Rossini’s best style ; it abounds in tasteful and original combinations. Signor

Spagnoletti was leader, and Mr. Ayrton stage manager. Rossini's comic opera 'Il Turco in Italia' was represented for the first time here on the 19th of May, when Madame Ronzi De Begnis and Signor De Begnis (from the opera in Paris) made their first appearance. The lady is remarkable for the delicacy of her voice and her neat execution, and the voice of the Signor is (for a bass) pure and flexible; but neither of them is very powerful. This was the first year of the lease Mr. Ebers had taken of the King's Theatre, during which he displayed great spirit and activity. Mr. Ayrton, whom he had appointed director, was every way qualified for that situation. The latter gentleman was son of the late Dr. Ayrton, many years master of the young gentlemen of the choir of the chapel royal at St. James's. I had the pleasure of being acquainted with Dr. Ayrton, who, when he had composed the exercise on which he obtained his degree of doctor of music at Oxford, invited me and Mr. Shaw, the leader, and a proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre, to dine with him, for the purpose of hearing his composition in the evening. When the coach stopped at the door of the doctor's new residence in James' Street, Westminster, I instantly recognised his house, as being the large and long shut up house, which, when I was a

child, was said to be haunted, and through the iron gates of which I had frequently pressed, and ran away terrified, fearing some ghost might follow me. During the dinner I related that circumstance, when the doctor, who was a native of Yorkshire, replied—"I have heard the story of the ghost, and respect him very much, for it was through his powerful influence that I obtained a long lease of this spacious mansion, with three acres of garden ground attached to it, for forty pounds a year!"

At the oratorio at Druy Lane Theatre, on the 30th of January, Madame Camporese sang an Italian *scena* in the first act, which was loudly encored. Mrs. Salmon gave 'Sul Margine,' and Mr. Braham, 'Luther's Hymn,' the trumpet accompaniment to which was admirably played by Mr. Harper. There are too many Italian airs and English ballads in our Lent performances. The divine songs of 'The Messiah' should not be blended with opera bravuras or common love ditties, "composed to a mistress' eye-brow." The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced on the 9th of March. In the first part a new *Te Deum* of great merit, composed by Romberg, was performed. The performance concluded with an ode, by Bishop, in honour of the anniversary of the King's accession to the throne.

When I was in Dublin, in 1796, the following instance of English eloquence afforded great amusement to the higher orders of Irish society, and was related by them as a set-off to Paddy's blunders :

When Lord Fitzgibbon was made lord chancellor of Ireland, about forty years ago, he gave an order to G—l, the then fashionable coachmaker in London, to build his state-coach. On the splendid carriage being finished, G—l (who was not very remarkable for the elegance of his phraseology) went over to Dublin to deliver it. During his short stay in the Irish capital, Lord Fitzgibbon invited him to dinner, in the course of which Lady Fitzgibbon, amongst other polite attentions, requested G—l to take *wine* with her; on which the coachmaker replied—“ I thank your ladyship very much, but I never takes no wine not at all at no time, not never, 'till I have done my dinner!”

This speech afterwards obtained for the coachmaker the appellation of “ The bundle of negatives.”

The concert of Ancient Music commenced at Hanover Square, Wednesday the 12th of March, and the Philharmonic concert began at the Argyll Rooms on the 15th of February. The Philharmonic concert, instituted in the year 1813, is a

public subscription concert, and consists of a certain number of proprietary members, embracing nearly all the superior talent of the metropolis. At its foundation it was so arranged, that all the members, however high their professional rank, should, when not appointed to play quartets, quintets, &c., (for concertos were interdicted,) descend from their stilts, and play ripieno parts, thereby forming a combination of excellence such as no other concert (since the dissolution of the professional concert) could boast. The French horns, bassoons, trumpets, and oboes, were not admitted as members, but were engaged by the season; but for what reason that distinction was made I cannot divine, unless it proceeded from the idea, that in paying their foundation subscriptions, the professors of those flatulent instruments might be too long-winded! This concert is held once a fortnight, on the Monday evenings, and its number is limited to nine. At first it was purely instrumental; but that sort of monotony not satisfying the subscribers, the aid of the most accomplished vocalists of both sexes was called in, which affording variety, rendered the performances unique. At this concert the new symphonies of the great modern masters are performed in an unequaled style of excellence, amongst which are those of Weber, Sphor, Cherubini, and Beeth-

oven. The latter composed one expressly for this concert, which was replete with science, grandeur, and effect: its performance took up more than an hour! It sometimes happens that a great composer, like a great beauty, imagines others will be pleased with him as long as he is pleased with himself.

The good old comedy of 'The Chances,' in which were introduced songs, &c., was performed for the first time at Covent Garden Theatre on the 18th of March. The drama was admirably arranged by Mr. Reynolds, who was engaged on a weekly salary for such purposes. The music was composed and selected by Bishop. In this piece Miss Hallande made her *début* in the part of the second Constantia. She displayed a rich and powerful voice, of extensive compass, and was much applauded.

Some years ago, whilst Kean, the celebrated actor, was performing for a limited number of nights in Dublin, a performer of ability who had for several seasons been attached to Covent Garden Theatre as the principal Harlequin, having just concluded an unprofitable Irish engagement, was thereby placed in so unpleasant a pecuniary situation as would have rendered him unable to return to his regular employment in London, but for the following fortunate rencontre: When

Bologna (almost in despair) was leaving the Dublin Theatre for the last time, Kean, who had heard of his misfortune, and was at that moment entering the theatre, taking him by the hand, requested he would accept his purse, which he presented to him, observing that he regretted it contained but a trifle. The astonished mime, unable to give utterance to his feelings, pressed the hand of his kind benefactor, and hurried away to communicate the event to his dejected family, who from its contents (twenty-three pounds) were at once relieved from their surrounding difficulties.

Kean had been endowed by nature with a feeling heart, and the goddess, who was ever near him, impelled him to the felicity of succouring the distressed.

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 11th of June, with a grand gala, &c.

In the summer of last year, (1820,) being on a visit at the country-house of a friend near London, I frequently met there an old man, late a farmer, who, though he had for some time abandoned the plough and the harrow, had nevertheless come up to the metropolis in the hope of reaping a golden harvest from the sale of a newly invented snuff, to cure not only weak, but sore eyes! The snuff was, as he said, a compound of various herbs,

which his deep knowledge in botany had enabled him to discover. This “man of science” being diffident of his own orthographical powers (for modesty generally accompanies merit), requested I would do him the favour to correct the prospectus, of which the following is a literal copy, and through which he intended to recommend it to the public :—

“ *Eye Snuff.* ”

“ The most astonishing Remedy Ever found out for the Benefit of Mankind. H. G.— the Bottiness, Begs Leafe to inform the Publicke, that by a long Expediment, and study, he has found out a remedy superier to any Ever yet before discover’d. It is Propriated Totely for the Eyes. It Cures All sorts of sore eyes, Suckers the Breane, and Helps the memory. It is drawn up the nose in the same manner as Common snuff, and the Eyes to be beathed with Cold spring water, and a linnen Cloath Every morning. By using it six times a day for the spase of one wheek it will strengthen a wheek eye of eather young or old, and by using it Regulear Three times a day it will take a perl of the Eyes. It is a remarkable strengetherer of the Obnoctive nerves, therefore there is no doubt but it will

Cleere and preserve the Eye sight for life."—Whether this snuff has been found to be an efficacious remedy for weak eyes I do not know, but it was a few months after it was promulgated purchased with as great avidity as if it had also been adapted to weak heads!

At Covent Garden Theatre Shakspeare's play of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' arranged as an opera, was performed on the 29th of November. The poetry of the songs was taken from his sonnets. The music was composed and compiled by Bishop. The duet, 'Say, tho' you strive,' was deservedly encored; and the air, 'When in disgrace,' by Miss M. Tree, is full of tenderness and expression, and was admirably sung.

John Walcot, M. D. (alias Peter Pindar), died in January, 1819, at his lodgings in Camden Town, aged 81. I knew him intimately for several years in the early part of my life, and the first song I ever composed and published was to some beautiful poetry of his (the subject of which was Indian), called 'The fields of Dohomay.' In the year 1787 he translated from the French the favourite opera of 'Nina,' performed at Covent Garden Theatre, the excellent music of which, composed by Daleyrac, was arranged by me. Dr. Walcot practised as a physician in Jamaica at the same time as Dr. Moseley; and as "two of

a trade can never agree," they had a quarrel (similar perhaps to that of Hogarth's 'Brace of Doctors') which proved irreconcilable. From Jamaica he returned to England, and settled in Cornwall, where he discovered the genius of Opie the painter, (then an obscure lad,) and ultimately made him come to London, where by study and observation he soon brought himself into notice. I was one of a party at a dinner given by Opie to Dr. Walcot, at the Shakspeare Tavern, in the year 1784, in consequence of his first successes as a painter in London, in the course of which the doctor jocosely reminded Opie of his first attempt in the graphic art in Cornwall, a sign of a Black Swan for a public house, for which the landlord demurred paying when finished, on account of its strong resemblance to a tea-kettle! The doctor piqued himself on his happy knack of relating West Indian anecdotes. "I was invited," said he "to sup with Mr. P—, a rich planter, and his wife. During the repast, my friend desired a female slave in waiting to mix some toddy, (rum and water,) on which the black girl, in her peculiar way, asked him if it was 'to be drinkey for dry, or drinkey for drunkey.' When our supper was ended, the night had become tempestuous, and our water being exhausted, Mr. P— sent his wife a short distance from the house

for a fresh supply. The thunder and lightning being excessive during her absence, I said to him, ‘ Why did you not send that girl (the slave) for water such a night as this, instead of your wife?’ —‘ O no,’ replied he, ‘ that would never do! That slave cost me forty pounds!’” Dr. Walcot was a sober man, although he drank a bottle of rum daily, which from habit had no particular effect on him. He was very fond of music, played the violin with taste, and produced some admirable effects in crayon drawings. As a poet he had acquired great celebrity, through which he enjoyed a comfortable independence, having sold the copy-right of his works for an annuity of two hundred pounds per annum, as has been already stated on a former occasion. The subjects, however, of several of them (as I have frequently told him) were too licentious. Notwithstanding the great and acknowledged talent of Dr. Walcot, he displayed a weakness which his friends could not observe without regret. After having related one of his amusing anecdotes, if one of the party (as a jest) affected to be struck with any particular part of it, and in admiration pointed it out to him, his vanity was thereby so highly excited, that he would relate the whole of it again and again, on another practising the same artifice. I had not seen the doctor for several years till I met him at

a dinner party in the house of a friend, in the year 1811. The deprivation of sight, which he had suffered in the interim, had produced great alteration in him. His conversation was more sedate, and his mind had acquired more solidity, though he still levelled his severities at his brother authors. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Paul's Covent Garden. Dr. Walcot lived a Deist, but probably did not die one, for amongst the writers who have disseminated that doctrine there are abundant instances of recantation.

1822.

The King's Theatre opened on the 12th of January, (Mr. Ebers proprietor,) under the direction of a committee of noblemen, with the opera of 'Le Nozze di Figaro.' Madame Camporese, Madame De Begnis, Signori Ambrogetti and Placci, and Signora Caradori, (her first appearance,) gave great effect to the beautiful music of Mozart. Signora Caradori's voice is sweet, and her singing is finished and delicate. Her principal song (as the Page) was encored. A new comic opera was produced on the 9th of April, called 'I due Pretendenti delusi.' The music was by Moscha. The air by Madame De Begnis, 'Deh! qual rigor,' with an obligato horn accompaniment by Puzzi, was greatly admired.

The music of this opera abounds in agreeable melody, enriched with science.

The oratorios were this season, for the first time, under the direction of Mr. Bochsa, the harp-player, and were given alternately at both our winter theatres. They began on the 30th of January, with a selection from Handel's *Messiah*, in which Mr. Sapiro made his first appearance in the opening recitative, 'Comfort ye my people,' and the air following, 'Every valley.' His voice is a tenor of considerable power and compass, and his style is tasteful. He was, however, deficient in that beautiful requisite in ancient music, a good shake.

The Vocal concert having expired at the end of the preceding season, a new one, Phœnix-like, arose out of its ashes, conducted by Messrs. William Knyvett and Greatorex, proprietors of the late vocal concert at the Argyll Rooms. The avowed object of these concerts was, "To rescue our national music from perishing in the vast vortex of the Italian opera;" to effect which, they engaged Madame Camporese, from the King's Theatre, as their principal singer!!! The first of a few concerts given by Catalani previous to her departure from England, took place at the Argyll Rooms on the 24th of April. Catalani sang Rode's air with variations, and Mozart's 'Non piu

Andrai,' with great effect. Mr. Yaniewicz led the band.

At Covent Garden Theatre a new musical play, taken from Sir Walter Scott's Tales of my Land-lord, called ' Montrose, or the Children of the Mist,' was produced on the 14th of February. In this piece Miss Stephens sang two agreeable Scotch airs, ' Charley is my darling,' and ' We're a' nodding,' (arranged by Mr. Hawes,) the latter of which was encored. The music, which was chiefly selected from the most favorite Scotch airs by Bishop, was pleasing.

The song, ' We're a' nodding,' being subsequently pirated and published in one of our magazines, by Mr. Taylor, jun., Mr. Hawes applied to the Lord Chancellor for an injunction, and after having, in support of his copyright, expended one hundred and twenty pounds, and Mr. Taylor in his defence seventy, the Lord Chancellor, Eldon, finally declared that he knew nothing of music, and left each party to pay his own costs !!!

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 3d of June, under the management of the persons deputed by the new proprietor. As these gardens have lately passed from the family in whose possession they had been ever since they were first opened as a place of public entertainment, I will here state

some of the leading particulars relative to them. The estate, which consists of the house and gardens, is copyhold, and contains eight acres, subject to a heriot (or fine) of five hundred pounds to the Prince of Wales, who is lord of the manor. It was formerly the mansion, &c. of — Vaux, Esq., and was, after the name of its owner, called Vaux's Hall, which time has so corrupted that the “noblesse” denominate it Vox Hall, and the “canaille” Fox Hall. This estate was purchased by Jonathan Tyers, Esq., who converted it into a place of public amusement in the year 1736. The entertainments consisted of a concert, suppers, &c., and the admission money was one shilling. The concert at first was purely instrumental, but in the year 1745 singing was introduced, and the singers first employed were Messrs. Low, Reinhold, sen., and Mrs. Arne (wife to Dr. Arne), who was a great favourite with the public. The organ was played by Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Worgan, who composed many of the songs, and the band was led by the eccentric Tom Collet. Collet was lame in his left leg, and the waterman who carried his fiddle-case for him from the barge to the gardens limped with his right leg. The waterman, encouraged by the good-nature of Collet, assumed a kind of familiarity with him,

and used to say to the leader (both limping along), “ Ah, Master Collet, you and I have seen many *ups* and *downs* in life !” Westminster bridge not being finished till 1750, Mr. Tyers built a handsome barge, which from Palace Yard old stairs conveyed his performers to Vauxhall, and back again when the performances were ended. It will appear that Mr. Tyers spared no expense in decorating the gardens, when it is stated that he employed that great artist, Hogarth, to invent the amusing pictures which lined the supper boxes ; Hayman and Mortimer to paint those in the saloon (which cost five hundred pounds each) ; and that famous sculptor Roubiliac, (at the expense of three hundred pounds,) to execute the fine statue of Handel, (now in the possession of Mr. Barret,) which stood in the gardens behind the noble Gothic orchestra. “ This statue of Handel,” says Dr. Burney, “ was placed in the gardens for the opening of the season on the 2nd of May, 1738. He is represented in a loose robe, sweeping the lyre, and listening to the sounds which a little boy, sculptured at his feet, seems to be writing down on the back of a violoncello, The whole composition is in elegant taste.” Soon after this statue was set up the following verses appeared :

That Orpheus moved a grove, a rock, a stream,
By music's power, will not a fiction seem ;
For here as great a miracle is shown,
A Handel breathing, though transform'd to stone.

Roubiliac (a Frenchman) came to England in the latter part of the reign of George the First, when there was a great dearth of native talent. The celebrated Lord Chesterfield said of him,— “Roubiliac is our only statuary, and the other artists are mere stone-cutters.” I cannot pass over a curious coincidence relative to Roubiliac. The first work he executed in this country was the above-mentioned statue of Handel, and, after a lapse of many years, (during which he produced a variety of rare specimens of his art,) the superb monument of the same great musician in Westminster Abbey was his last ! Mr. Tyers, by his spirited management, soon brought the gardens to an uncommon degree of popularity ; though his temper was so extremely irritable, that when bad weather kept the public away, he would thump his hat, and swear that if he had been a hatter, men would have been made without heads ! That he possessed a large portion of obstinacy also, the following fact will prove : His eldest son, Mr. Jonathan Tyers, jun., wishing to be united in marriage to an accomplished young lady who had

no fortune, his father, on being consulted on the subject, swore that if he married her he would turn his back on him for ever. The son, to conquer his passion, went to the East Indies. On his return home (after suffering shipwreck) he learnt that the object of his attachment had been married during his absence, and had become a widow, with a jointure of eight hundred pounds a year. The intimacy was renewed, and conceiving that his father's objection was now removed, he informed him that it was his intention to make the widow his wife ; on which the old gentleman exclaimed with great warmth,—“ As I refused my consent when the lady had not a shilling, if you marry her now she has got a fortune, I'll disinherit you ! ” The son, however, married the lady, and the father kept his word, for at his death he cut Mr. J. Tyers, jun., off with a shilling ! At the death of Mr. Tyers the gardens devolved on his son, Mr. Thomas Tyers (a counsellor), and his two daughters, who, in order to induce their disinherited brother to take on himself the entire management of the gardens, divided the property into four equal parts, one of which they presented to him as a remuneration for his services. This gentleman was of a different disposition to his father's ; the one being irritable and obstinate, the other mild and forgiving ; and although his

father had acted with so much severity towards him, he forgave him “from the bottom of his heart.” On the anniversary of his father’s death (which took place during the Vauxhall season) Mr. Tyers invariably caused to be performed in the concert Handel’s ‘Dead march in Saul;’ and it was his custom (as I have often witnessed) to steal unobserved to a tree near to the orchestra, and listen to that impressive composition, whilst he indulged in filial reflections, and dropped a tear to the memory of a revered though unkind parent. Mr. Tyers continued the liberal system of his father in the management of the gardens, and having survived his relatives, they ultimately became his sole property. At his demise they came into the possession of Mr. Barrett, who had married Miss Tyers. At the death of Mr. Barrett, who had greatly improved them, the Gardens descended to his two sons, George Rogers Barrett, Esq., and the Rev. Jonathan Tyers Barrett, (now a D.D.,) and were wholly under the direction of the former, who during his management (to the end of the season 1821) brought them to the acmé of elegance and fashion. These gardens, now the property of Mr. Phillips, of sporting celebrity, were managed by Mr. Bish, of lottery notoriety, under whose direction they underwent a strange metamorphosis. The concert, which had hitherto

been performed by musicians of the first class, (forty in number,) selected from the orchestras of the Opera House, the concert of Ancient Music, and the two patent theatres, was now (with the exception of half a dozen stringed instruments) performed by the military band of the guards, who, at the end of the acts, by doffing their coloured coats and slipping on their regimental ones, were quickly ready to perform their old duties of playing to the rope-dancing, &c. It would have been well for these Proteuses to have had recourse to the well-known expedient of John Wilkes, Esq., of patriotic memory, whose blue coat and gold, lined with scarlet, was so contrived, that when a change of dress was necessary, by turning it inside out it presented a military dress of scarlet and gold, lined with blue !

In the summer of this year, 1822, I went from London to pass a week or two at Brighton with a particular friend and pupil of mine, (a young man of fortune,) and his wife, who had with them a favourite livery servant, a lad about eighteen years old. We had good lodgings in James Street, at an earthen-ware and china shop, which was so well stocked, that a great number of the larger articles were suspended from the ceiling. We passed a week very pleasantly, but during the following one our pleasure was interrupted by my

friend having given his servant leave to go out (with a strict injunction to return in time to lay the cloth for dinner at five o'clock) to see the King and suite set out from the Pavilion for London. Five o'clock arrived, but no footman appeared. The people of the house, however, prepared the table ; but, on the dinner being served up, it was discovered that the lad had locked up the plate, and had taken the key in his pocket. This circumstance putting my friend into a violent fit of anger, he arose from his seat, and, after having paced the room a few times, he began dancing, or rather stamping, and at length jumping like a madman, a tremendous crash was heard, as if the house was falling. This produced instantaneous surprise and silence ; and while we were speculating on the probable cause of it, the enigma was solved by the *entrée* of the landlady in a state of great excitement, protesting against proceedings which had unhinged most of the articles which had been appended to the shop-ceiling directly under him, and had reduced to fragments one-half of her stock. This event, together with reflection, brought my friend to his senses, and having ten pounds subsequently to pay for the destruction his violence had occasioned, he never afterwards indulged himself in a similar *pas seul*.

Whilst at Brighton, having a desire to see the

King's Guard parade, I attended that ceremony one morning, and was greatly pleased with the evolutions gone through by a battalion of the fifty-second regiment, then on duty there, and by the performance of the band, who, amongst other pieces, played one in which each instrument had an obligato variation. I was not however equally gratified with the new mode of dismissing the men by double-quick time, which, while it in some measure resembled the breaking-off of a boys' school, ill accorded with the dignity of the army. The drill-sergeant, notwithstanding, must have experienced vast labour whilst initiating them into this new practice, running having been (till this novelty was instituted) a part of military discipline unknown to British soldiers. It must however be acknowledged that military tactics in England have been greatly improved during the last half century ; and that, although several of them have been imported from Germany and France, they are not foreign to the purpose. It should be observed also, that the present uniforms of our soldiers (with their trousers, and cropped and unpowdered hair,) are calculated to show their persons to advantage, while it affords them ease and comfort, without engrossing nearly the whole of their time in preparation, as was formerly the case. Fifty years ago, the men, before they

fell in for guard on the parade in St. James's Park, were occupied two or three hours in getting ready, their dressing-room being the *pavé* of the open street close to the gate of the Horse Guards, where in the morning was presented a scene as grotesque as that displayed in Hogarth's celebrated 'March to Finchley.' They first underwent the operation of shaving, and sometimes perhaps bleeding; next, that of dressing and powdering the hair. The latter (powdering) being accomplished by soaping the head all over with a brush, and afterwards covering it with flour issuing from a dredging-box, whereby it became as close and as white as a cauliflower. But the most unpleasant part of the ceremony was that of the barber whilst tying their long queus, pulling the skin of their heads so far back, that they were at night deprived of sleep from not being able to shut their eyes. The officers of that day, like those of the present, displayed great skill and courage, and were devoted to the service. A curious instance of this occurred in the year 1813, in an officer of the Guards who had been serving for a considerable period in the Peninsula, under that great captain the Duke of Wellington. This young man, who had been in several battles, having leave of absence for a short time to come to England on private matters of great importance, was so

eaten up with *ennui* during his stay in London, that he declared at the mess-dinner of the officers of the King's Guard at St. James's, that his then dull life was to him so irksome that he longed for the day when he should set out to rejoin his regiment.

A new comic opera, called 'Maid Marian,' was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 30th of November. It was written by Mr. Planche; the music by Mr. Bishop. The principal part of the music was allotted to Miss M. Tree, who sang it admirably, and was greatly applauded. The overture, and the whole music of this piece, is highly meritorious.

1823.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 4th of January, with Mozart's opera, 'La Clemenza di Tito.' I must here trespass on the reader by relating an original anecdote of Mozart, which had only recently come to my knowledge, and which shows the kindness of his nature. I dined by invitation with an old gentleman, (Mr. Z—n, a German,) who had been intimate with Mozart, and had lately come from Vienna to England. In the course of our conversation Mozart being spoken of, he produced from his music room the copy of a minuet and trio on a quarto

sheet, composed by that extraordinary musician in his best style, under the following curious circumstances : Mozart was one day accosted in the streets of Vienna by a beggar, who not only solicited alms of him, but by strong circumstances endeavoured to make it appear that he was distantly related to him. Mozart's feelings were excited ; but being unprovided with money, (as is frequently the case with men of genius,) he desired the beggar to follow him to the next coffee-house, where, taking writing-paper, and drawing lines on it with his pen, he in a few minutes composed the minuet and trio alluded to. This, and a letter, Mozart directed him to take to Mr. ——, his publisher, of whom the mendicant received a sum equal to five guineas ! The copy, I believe the only one in England, was presented to me, and was afterwards given by me to Mr. Shield.

On Tuesday, the 14th of January, Rossini's popular opera 'La Gazza Ladra' was performed, when Signor Porto made his first appearance in the part of 'Fernando.' The voice of Porto is a powerful bass of good quality : one of his songs was encored. Saturday, the 25th of January, Rossini's opera of 'Tancredi' was performed, when Madame Borgondio and Signor Reina (a tenor) made their first appearance. Madame Borgondio's performance of 'Tancredi' was a

complete failure, but Signor Reina displayed a powerful and well-cultivated voice. The new opera of 'La Donna del Lago,' by the same composer, was represented for the first time on the 18th of February. The talents of Rossini in this opera are highly conspicuous. It contains several pieces in his best style; and its success was such, that it was performed twenty-three consecutive nights. A new comic opera, called 'Eliza e Claudio,' was produced on the 12th of April. The music was composed by Mercandante. This piece was admirably performed by Madame Camporese, Madame Caradori, and Signor Curioni. The music, distinguished by its brilliancy and sweetness, partakes of that gay and lively style first introduced by Rossini. Madame Camporese brought out for her benefit, on the 5th of June, Rossini's new opera, called 'Ricciardo e Zoraido.' The music of this opera gave great satisfaction, and several pieces were encored, among which the finale to the second act, and a beautiful trio, sung by Garcia, Camporese, and Madame Vestris.

The oratorios, which were again performed alternately at both theatres, commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 30th of January, under the direction of Mr. Bochsa, with a grand performance of ancient and modern music. At the end

of the second part Madame Camporese sang an Italian *scena*, in which she was greatly applauded, and Mr. Mori performed a concerto on the violin with great taste, and in a brilliant style of execution. This gentleman, in the year 1805, (then a boy,) played concertos on the violin in public with so much ability, that he was called ‘The young Orpheus.’ An idea has been long entertained by many, that great names inspire great achievements, and Mr. Mori’s performance was such as might have tended to confirm some waverers in that ridiculous system. But although the notion is truly absurd, I actually knew a gentleman of large fortune who placed implicit belief in it. Mr. B—y had an only son, who, at the early age of five years, discovered so strong a predilection for guns, swords, and drums, in his toys, that he gave him the appellation of Cæsar, and determined to bring him up to the profession of arms. In due time he purchased a commission for his son, who, after carrying the colours for a while, was promoted, and sent to the continent during the late war with his regiment, when, this ‘Cæsar’ thinking “ the better part of valour is discretion,” fought shy in an affair of out-posts, was tried by a court-martial, and dismissed the service !

The oratorios for the Lent season began on the 9th of February at Covent Garden Theatre, with

a selection from the works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, &c., in which Madame Cam-porese, Mrs. Salmon, Miss Paton, Mr. Braham, and Mr. Sapiro, sang with great effect. At the end of the first part was performed a concertante for two harps, by Mr. Bochsa and Miss Dibdin, his pupil. Mr. Bochsa in his performance displayed great powers of execution, and his music was scientific and pleasing; but there is something repulsive in a gigantic sort of a personage like Mr. Bochsa playing on so feminine an instrument as the harp, whose strings, in my opinion, should only be made to vibrate by the delicate fingers of the ladies. If it is said that this is an ideal nicety, I will answer,—so is that (so generally expressed) which condemns an actor of low stature for appearing as Alexander the Great.

A grand concert, under the patronage of his Majesty, took place at the King's Theatre on the 24th of April, for the benefit of the new institution called 'The Royal Academy of Music.' The whole of the opera and other popular singers performed on the occasion. Mr. F. Cramer led the band.

A new opera in two acts was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre on the 8th of May, called 'Clari, or the Maid of Milan:' the music by Mr. Bishop. Miss M. Tree's song, 'Sweet home,'

is a beautiful specimen of taste and simplicity. The melody is taken from one occurring in a German opera, and the effective accompaniments are composed by Bishop. This air, charmingly sung by Miss M. Tree, was honoured with universal applause and an encore. The music of this piece is altogether of a very superior description.

Two or three days previous to that which had been fixed upon for the benefit of the Philanthropic Society at Covent Garden Theatre Mr. C. Kemble, who was to have performed on that occasion the character of Romeo, (though too old for it,) in the tragedy of 'Romeo and Juliet,' being taken ill, the committee of members appointed to superintend the performance, on being apprised of that circumstance, found it necessary to apply for advice from some of the authorities of the theatre. On consulting the stage-manager, he informed them that there was not any one belonging to the company who could act the part to their advantage except Mr. Macready, who it was by no means certain would become the substitute for Mr. C. Kemble; but that they had better try the experiment of asking him. The committee accordingly waited on Mr. Macready, who received them politely, but with a great portion of that superabundant importance for which he was so much distinguished. On the committee communicating

to him the nature of their mission, the hero of the buskin, prudently considering that it might not redound to his credit to refuse assisting a public charity, replied with lofty condescension,—“I will certainly act for the benefit of the Philanthropic Society; but I see how it is, as you cannot have the corporal you now apply to the general!”

The Yorkshire grand musical festival, held in York Minster, took place on the 23rd of September and the three following days, under the patronage of the Archbishop of York and a long list of nobles. Madame Catalani, Miss Stephens, Mr. Braham, Mr. Vaughan, and Mr. Sapiro, sang with great effect; and the whole of the performances went off in the best possible style. The influx of company into the city of York was uncommonly great, and the inhabitants did not evince any lack of self-love in their mode of letting lodgings to the Londoners. “They were strangers, and they took them in.” The Minster, on the days of performance, from the elegance of the dresses and the beauty of the ladies, presented a scene truly fascinating.

The late Mr. Baumgarten, the great musical theorist, when a boy was, in his native country, Germany, apprenticed to Mr. Kunzen, an eminent musician. That gentleman having one evening given his servant leave to go out, after having put

down to the fire a partridge to roast for his supper, and having occasion to absent himself for a short time, desired the boy (young Baumgarten) to superintend it till he returned; and, placing on the sideboard a pint decanter of Moselle wine, told him, to prevent his tasting it, that it was poison. The master staying out beyond his time, and the partridge becoming over-done, the boy, with a longing look, putting his finger to it, one of the legs dropped off. After having recovered from his surprise, he ate it, and soon after pursuing the same course, off came a wing, which he ate also. At length, being impelled by the irresistibility of the bird's flavour, as well as by an insatiable appetite, and thinking that master had stayed out so late he would not return to supper, he devoured the remainder of it, trusting to his invention for an excuse. Having finished his meal, reflection, which generally comes too late, overtaking him, and dreading the severity of his master's disposition, he determined, in despair, to swallow the poison in the decanter, which had been placed on the sideboard. This he had scarcely effected when his master knocked at the door, which the boy in his confusion delayed to open; and on being asked why he did not come sooner, the boy, much agitated, replied,—“ The cat ate it!”—“ Why, you are dreaming,” said the

master. The answer was again,—“ The cat ate it!” The master finding that he could obtain no other reply, entered the kitchen, where, not seeing any partridge at the fire, and a plate full of well-picked bones lying on the table, which the boy had neglected to put out of sight, was preparing to chastise him, when the boy, almost drowned in tears, cried,—“ Pray, sir, don’t beat me,—I can’t live long,—for I was so much grieved at the fault I had committed, that I swallowed the whole bottle of poison!”

Baumgarten, soon after he came to England, was patronised by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, brother to George the Third, and, during the summer season, was at the head of his musical establishment at the Royal Lodge at Windsor. The duke having made an addition to his stud, by the purchase of a pair of beautiful carriage-horses, occasionally drove them in a break in Windsor Great Park, of which he was ranger. One morning he invited Baumgarten, whose disposition was extremely timid, to sit on the box with him; and as the invitation of his Royal Highness was tantamount to a command, he with secret reluctance ascended. During their progress the duke, who was a kind-hearted and a very young man, knowing Baumgarten’s fearful disposition, and wishing to have a little harmless

sport with him, made the young horses kick and plunge, crying out at the same time,—“Take care of yourself, Baumgarten, or you’ll be off!” which so terrified the musician, that losing sight of the respect he had felt towards his patron, and catching him fast round the waist, he exclaimed,—“By G—d, if I go you shall go too!”

The Duke of Cumberland obtained the valuable office of ranger of Windsor Great Park under the following circumstances:—On that place becoming vacant his Royal Highness applied to the King for the appointment, which his Majesty, for what reason I know not, refused him. A short time afterwards, it still remaining vacant, the duke, whilst attending Ascot Heath races, experienced so serious an injury by his horse falling with him, that his life was despaired of. The King, who possessed all the best feelings of human nature, and was much attached to his royal brother, displayed great solicitude at his misfortune, was unceasing in his inquiries, and when he became a little better visited him. His Majesty, after having condoled with the duke, knowing that he had set his heart on the rangership, and being desirous of affording him every consolation in his power, said to him with great affection, “Pray keep up your spirits, Henry, and when you get better you shall have the park.” The duke by slow degrees

fortunately recovering, his Majesty gave him the appointment. At the duke's lodge I have passed many very agreeable days whilst attending his Royal Highness professionally. He was liberal, kind, and condescending to all around him, and particularly so to me. One summer, whilst I was there, I was greatly surprised and amused at viewing one of the inhabitants of the water under the following circumstances:—This fish was a large jack or pike, who for voracity is comparable to the most ferocious of the brute species, and might without hyperbole be denominated the finny-tiger. It was caught in Virginia Water, and was to form a part of the duke's dinner. When the cook, in preparing it, cut open the belly to cleanse it, to his astonishment he discovered therein a large water-rat, in a perfect state, which the fish had recently swallowed entire! The thing being very curious, one of the pages invited me and some of my musical friends to witness it; and although the circumstance may appear a very extraordinary one, the reader may swallow the relation with perfect safety, as the jack did the rat, for I pledge myself to the truth of it! The Duke of Cumberland, while in London in the winter season, had morning concerts twice a week at Cumberland House, in which the masterly compositions of Baumgarten were played by his Royal Highness on the violin,

the elder Cramer, Blake, Waterhouse, Baumgarten, Shield, and me. This amiable prince, to the deep regret of all who were honoured with his notice, died in September 1790, in the 45th year of his age, as has been already stated in another place. Music mourned the loss of its warm patron, the Duke of Cumberland, after which the art began to decline, and which declension was farther enhanced by the war with the French republic in 1792, whereby the soft breathings of the flute gave place to the shrill clangour of the brazen trumpet, and the feminine and graceful tabor to the terrific roll of the thundering drum. Music continued in a depressed state nearly ten years, when at length the political horizon beginning to clear, the arts were again descried through the mists which had obscured them, and the fascinations of our own popular singer, Mrs. Billington, aided by the powerful talents of Madame Banti, Signora Storace, and others, enabled the muse to regain the high pinnacle from which she had descended. Mr. Baumgarten for many years held the situation of leader of the band, and composer, at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden ; and as a proof that his ample appetite, when a boy, had proportionably extended with his growth, it will only be necessary to state, that at a supper between him and a friend after the play, at a

coffee-house in the vicinity of the theatre, they ate a full-grown hare, &c. between them, although Baumgarten's companion suffered under the pangs of "a raging tooth!" Baumgarten, who was a tall, athletic man, would never condescend to drink out of any thing less than a quart pot. He was an excellent scholar as well as musician. He had written an admirable treatise on music, which I have frequently seen when I studied harmony under him; but what became of it after his death I never could learn. It is much to be regretted, however, that a work possessing so much learning and science should be lost to the musical world, perhaps for ever. Baumgarten was very fond of the German style of eating; and in compliment to him, Mr. Shield, the composer, myself, and a few others belonging to Covent Garden Theatre, made a party to dine with him at a German eating-house, in Castle Street, Leicester Square, kept by a countryman of his named Weiler. This man was purveyor of sour-croût to her Majesty Queen Charlotte, consort to George the Third, and had the honour to supply it for her use twice a week, in the following manner:—A footman was despatched from the kitchen of the palace, with a bright tin-case locked, of which the principal cook, who sent him, had a key, and Weiler another. This case, after having been filled by

Weiler, was locked again by him, and sent back to the cook by the same servant, whereby no one could have access to its contents but the two persons named. Our dinner, on the German plan, consisted of soup and noodles (paste cut awkwardly after the manner of vermicelli), a roasted turkey stuffed with chestnuts, a dish of sour-croût boiled with a piece of fat pork, Brunswick sausages, and a cabbage salad, mixed with dandelion and garlick, a jugged hare (off which the cook professed to have taken nine skins, and to have been a whole previous day in effecting this), stewed with various grease and herbs to make it “thick and slab,” some stewed sour red cabbage, and black bread, called bumpernikle. All the articles composing this foreign feast were perfectly fresh and of good quality; but the stench in the house, arising, I presume, from uncleanliness, was so disgusting, that it might have been conceived that they were fast approaching towards putridity. There are few things which prove the force of habit more fully than the predilection evinced by the Germans for sour-croût, which is nothing more than cabbages kept till they become rank. This dish, from the length and severity of the winters in Germany, is a matter of necessity there; it might therefore be supposed, that when persons of that country come to England, it would be su-

perseded by the variety of fresh vegetables our gardens even throughout the winter afford. They, however, turn up their noses at them all, and glut their appetites even to satiety on a mess of sour-crust! This reminds me of the young Hottentot formerly brought from the Cape of Good Hope to Holland, where he was for a considerable time educated and dressed according to the European fashion. When taken back, however, as soon as he landed he stripped off his clothes and ran away shouting, to enjoy his natural food, train oil and garbage, with his Caffre brethren !

Mr. Sinclair having returned from his studies in Italy, made his first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 19th of November, in the character of Orlando, in the opera of 'The Cabinet.' Sinclair proved that he had not crossed the Alps in vain. His voice had become flexible, and his style was advantageously tinctured by the Italian style, though he had not entirely lost his Caledonian dialect. In the air, ' My beautiful maid,' he was encored once, and in the polacca, ' No more by sorrow chas'd,' he was, *à la* Braham, encored twice. He gave, however, the whole of the music of his part with great ability.

In the year 1821 I occasionally dined with a pupil of mine, Mr. Knight, a young gentleman of good family and fortune, who had lately left

college. This young man (who played the most difficult pieces on the flute admirably) and his brother Cantabs when they met, were very fond of relating the wild tricks for which the students of the University of Cambridge are celebrated. The following relation of one will convey some idea of their general eccentricity: A farmer who resided at a considerable distance from Cambridge, but who had nevertheless heard of the excesses committed by the students, having particular business in the before-mentioned seat of the muses, together with a strong aversion to entering it, took his seat on the roof of the coach, and being impressed with an idea of danger, anxiously said to the coachman, who was a man of few words, "I'ze been towld that the young gentlemen at Cambridge be wild chaps."—"You'll see," replied the coachman; "and," added the farmer, "that it be hardly safe to be among 'em."—"You'll see," again replied the coachman. During the journey the farmer put several other interrogatories to the coachman, which were answered as before with "You'll see!" When they had arrived in the High Street of Cambridge, Mr. Knight had a party of young men at his lodgings, who were sitting in the first floor, with the windows all open, and a large china bowl full of punch before them, which they just broached. The noise made by

their singing and laughing attracting the notice, and exciting the fears of the farmer, he again, addressing his taciturn friend, the coachman, (whilst passing close under the window,) said with great anxiety, “Are we all safe, think ye?” When, before the master of the whip had time to utter his favourite monosyllables, “You’ll see,” bang came down on the top of the coach, bowl, punch, glasses, &c. to the amazement and terror of the farmer, who was steeped in his own favourite potation. “There,” said coachee, (who had escaped a wetting,) “I said as how you’d see!”

1824.

This season Rossini was engaged as director and composer to the King’s Theatre, and his wife, Madame Colbran Rossini, as *prima donna seria*. Madame Catalani and Madame Pasta were also engaged for a limited number of nights. The season began on the 24th of January, with a new grand serious opera, called ‘Zelmira.’ The music composed by Rossini, who was to preside at the piano-forte the three first nights. In this opera Madame Colbran Rossini made her *début*. She possessed a fine figure, was an excellent actress, and sang with taste and feeling. Her voice, however, wanted power, and her shake was very imperfect. This opera, which abounds in science

and melody, was composed expressly for the Emperor of Austria, and was first performed at Vienna. Rossini had bestowed particular pains on it, in consequence of some of the German writers having asserted that he had more imagination than learning. These German composers, whose spleen was complimentary to Rossini's genius, (for "envy is a sort of praise,") had forgot perhaps that imagination is a gift imparted to few, and that learning may be acquired by many. At the end of the opera Rossini was loudly called for. He came forward and received the most distinguished applause. Madame Catalani appeared, for the first time since her return from the continent, on the 27th of February, in Mayer's popular comic opera, 'Il fanatico per la musica.' On her entrance she was greeted with shouts of applause. She sang and acted admirably, and though her voice was abridged in its upper notes, yet (like the sea retiring from one shore to gain on another) her lower ones were considerably extended. At the fall of the curtain she was called for, when she again presented herself, making her obeisance amidst waving of handkerchiefs and tumultuous applause. Madame Pasta made her first appearance for seven years, on the 14th of April, as Desdemona, in Rossini's serious opera 'Otello.' She was very greatly improved, and sang and

acted in a style of high perfection. She also had a call when the curtain fell, and was brought back to receive the reward due to her distinguished talents. It is the highest ambition of the opera singers (like the Methodists) to have a call.

The oratorios, under the direction of Mr. Bochsa, commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 5th of March, with a selection from Handel's 'Messiah,' new oratorio, called 'The Day of Judgment,' &c. The last-named composition, written by Schneider for the King of Prussia, has considerable merit. These performances were given alternately at both theatres.

The first of six concerts of ancient and modern sacred music, similar to the *Concert Spirituel* in Paris, took place on the same evening at the King's Theatre, in which the opera singers assisted. Catalani sang 'Rule Britannia' and 'Gratius Agimus' admirably, accompanied on the clarionet by Mr. Willman, with great applause. The company was rather select. The first of the Oxford concerts took place in the music room on the 18th of February. Miss Stephens sang Zingarelli's air, 'Ombra adorata aspetta,' and Bishop's song, 'Lo here the gentle lark,' with much effect; and Mr. Nicholson performed a concerto on the flute with great neatness. The Oxford concerts, which formerly, owing to the uncérémonious de-

meanour of the students of the University, were the terror of timid singers, now pass off with as much decorum as those of the metropolis. When that incomparable singer Madame Mara, during the height of her popularity, sang there forty years ago, even her transcendent talents did not secure her from the mortification of being hissed, in consequence of their conceiving that she displayed too much importance in her manner of bearing herself. If a singer of Mara's extraordinary abilities was so treated, no wonder will be excited by the fate of Signor Samperio (a soprano), about the same period, who, though he did not perhaps display great vocal powers, certainly evinced great philosophy. On the evening of the concert, when Samperio came forward in the orchestra to sing, it appeared that his tall lank figure, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, and shrill treble voice, did not make a favourable impression on the collegians, for before he had proceeded half through his cavatina they hissed him off. This event filled the gentleman who acted as steward with the deepest concern, who, going up to Samperio, endeavoured to soothe his wounded feelings; but the Signor, not at all hurt, replied, "O, Sare, never mind,—dey may hissa me as much as dey please, if I getti di money!"

A morning concert, under the patronage of his

Majesty, was given at the Hanover Square Rooms on the 25th of February, for the benefit of "The Royal Academy of Music." This concert, for the first time executed by the students, gave great promise of future excellence. This institution, as has already been stated, was founded in the year 1822, under the King's patronage, and it is managed by directors, among whom are his Grace the Archbishop of York, Lord Burghersh, and other persons of distinction. The boys receive instructions to qualify them as singers, performers on various instruments, and as composers; and the girls, as singers, and performers on the harp and piano-forte. They are also taught the Italian language. The pupils are well lodged and boarded, in the spacious mansion provided for their accommodation in Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, one part of which is exclusively for the use of females, where masters attend to give them lessons. In the winter season concerts are given, performed by the pupils and others, the profits of which, together with the yearly subscriptions of the pupils, are applied to the support of the establishment. I cannot omit to offer my meed of praise to the founders and directors of the Royal Academy of Music, and my humble and dutiful admiration of the beneficence of our late august Sovereign George the Fourth, who, by honouring this

institution with his gracious patronage, affords hope to industry and encouragement to genius.

A new opera, called ‘Philandering, or the Rose Queen,’ was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 14th of January: In this piece the efforts of Braham, Miss Stephens, and Madame Vestris, were highly successful. The music in general is creditable to the talent of Mr. Horn its composer. This piece was given out for repetition amidst tumultuous applause. Without meaning to detract from its merits, it may be observed, that the public cannot well judge of the real success of a new piece by the approbation it obtains on the first night, for amongst various modes secretly adopted to secure it passing that ordeal, I have known the whole of the firemen attached to certain offices to be placed in the gallery, not according to their usual practice of throwing cold water on what was going on, but to bestow their indiscriminate applause, in conformity with the principle of the vulgar adage, “If you throw much dirt, some of it will stick.” A new opera, called ‘Native Land, or The Return from Slavery,’ was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 18th of February. The music was composed and selected from Rossini, by Bishop. In this opera Sinclair sang the whole of his airs with great effect, though there was a great want of variety in

his cadences. Miss Paton executed two airs by Rossini, one a bravura, in a style of uncommon ability. She also sang a plaintive air, by Bishop, admirably accompanied on the harp by herself. The music throughout is of a very superior description, and was universally applauded.

At the last rehearsal of the revived old comedy ‘A Woman never Vexed, or The Widow of Cornhill,’ brought out at Covent Garden Theatre this season, 1824, in the scene in the fifth act, where the procession on the Lord Mayor’s day takes place, Farley, who had the direction of it, observing that the trumpets which preceded the chief magistrate of the city were not in tune, exclaimed,— “ Those trumpets will never do; they are horribly out of tune !” To which the principal trumpeter replied, “ Sir, we played out of tune on purpose, to make it in character, for who ever heard of music being in tune at Lord Mayor’s show ?” The music for Lord Mayor’s day is provided by those persons who hold the purchased places, called city-waits, each of which cost from a hundred to a hundred and ten pounds, and produce about thirteen or fourteen pounds a-year, besides perquisites and patronage. Many years ago I knew one of those waits, a Mr. Jenkins, commonly called fat Jenkins. This man, who played the trumpet at Drury Lane Theatre in

Garrick's time, provided the musicians, if so they may be called, on Lord Mayor's day, for one of the city companies ; and being by virtue of his office intitled to a share of the viands which at the dinner had not been wholly consumed, he, when about to return to his home at night, had a sedan chair procured for him, which, after having stuffed with parts of turkies, tongues, fowls, and bottles of wine, he got into himself. When the chairmen had reached the top of Pudding Lane the bottom of the chair, unable longer to endure the pressure, gave way, and out tumbled the remains of turkies, tongues, fowls, bottles of wine, and fat Mr. Jenkins ! to the vast amusement of many of the holiday folks, who, taking advantage of the disaster, one fellow hopped off with the leg of a turkey, another flew away with a wing, whilst the women monopolised the tongues ! The reiterated shouts of these people brought up the watchmen, one of whom, whilst assisting to deliver the forlorn Mr. Jenkins from under the chair, said, slipping half a boiled fowl into his pocket, “ This chair is too full !”—“ Ay,” said another, who knew Mr. Jenkins, “ but it would have gone safe enough if they had not put in that heavy wait !” (weight.)

Weber's celebrated opera called ‘ *Der Freyschütz*, or The Seventh Bullet,’ was brought out at

the English Opera House, for the first time in this country, on the 22nd of July in this year. The music of this opera is such a continued display of science, taste, and melody, as to justify any praises bestowed on it. The overture embraces most of the subjects of the airs in the opera, ingeniously interwoven with each other, and is quite original ; the grandeur of some passages, and the finely contrasted simplicity of others, produced an effect which was irresistible. It was vehemently encored. The whole of this opera went off with unqualified approbation, and was performed with undiminished attraction thirty-six consecutive nights. The public were indebted to Mr. Arnold, proprietor of this theatre, for its introduction into England. ‘*Der Freyschütz*’ was produced with alterations at Covent Garden Theatre on the 15th of October. It found an able representative of the principal female character in Miss Paton. In the fine *scena* in the second act she sang with the utmost feeling and taste, and stamped herself the first English singer of the day. The same opera was brought out, with further alterations, at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 10th of November, with great success.

Quick, commonly called little Quick, a former celebrated comedian of Covent Garden Theatre, retired from the stage about the year 1796. Af-

terwards, however, he acted occasionally for a few nights at some of the provincial theatres. During a summer trip I made to Margate several years after Quick had retired, I went to the theatre there to see him perform one of his former popular characters in comedy, when his representation of it exhibited less of the Quick than the dead ! In fact, Quick having been a long time detached from the London theatres, had not marked the revolution which had taken place, and had entirely changed the style of acting, giving, like an improved style in dress, a grace and smartness not witnessed in former times :

“ Fashion in every thing bears sovereign sway,
And bags and periwigs have each their day.”

His performance reminded me of an old-fashioned coat, which though composed of good stuff, displayed a great redundancy of skirts and sleeves. Quick, who is still every inch an actor, owing to the salubrious air of Islington, perhaps, is now living, and is more than eighty years old. As a man, he is much respected ; and although methodism so much prevails in that vicinity of London, he sticks fast to the established church. By the by, a word or two on the Methodists. It is not difficult to account for the vast increase of that sect of dissenters, who seem to promise hereafter to outnumber the members of the Church of

England. The proselytes they make would appear surprising, did we not know by what means they were effected. Their leading preachers and others who follow their example, go into the houses of the poorer sort of persons, and when they are sick, or are suffering under privations during an inclement season, present to them tickets for bread, meat, and coals, which they take to the different tradesmen who are thereby authorised to supply them. They have schools, where boys and girls are not only instructed gratis, but are annually clothed, and at a proper season are apprenticed with a respectable fee; and so devoted are they to their tenets, that even the ladies, young and beautiful, go about from house to house, to distribute bounties and to collect weekly subscriptions, as low as twopence, for Bibles, &c., which are delivered to those who subscribe at half the usual price. Is it then matter of wonder that they should make so many converts, their charities, and their cant being addressed to the labouring poor and their children, who are so greatly benefited by their benevolences, that they would consider themselves wanting in gratitude were they not to embrace their mode of worship? I have however known instances where some churchmen of infamous character have, by hypocritically affecting to fall into their

opinions, been loaded with favours; and the blind zeal of these sectarians has carried them so far, that when even made acquainted with their enormities, they have offered excuses for them, in consequence of their having apparently abandoned the established church, by occasionally presenting themselves at the methodistical chapel. If the views of these sectarians, as many assert, are directed by hypocrisy or ostentation, or any other feeling not of a criminal nature, we should not, while we admire the effect, be too nice in scrutinising the cause. I have thus far digressed because I have lately had opportunities of witnessing their efforts; and while I observe the great extension of that sect, I lament that it is not checked by counter liberalities on the part of the members of the established church, who, wrapt in their dignified security, may, from the thinness of their congregations, find hereafter that the large sums of money which have been expended in erecting new churches might have been applied to more beneficial purposes. I will, however, return to the former subject. We say, "once a captain always a captain," and we might add, "once an actor always an actor," for by the words which issue from the mouth of an actor, his calling is as clearly identified as is the barber's by the curling irons, the half of which are seen out of his pocket.

Amongst other persons of respectability who occasionally called on Quick, was the rector of the parish in which he resides. During one of the morning visits of the latter, the reverend gentleman observed, that on the ensuing Sunday he should preach the sermon. On this Quick, thinking he would pay the rector a supreme compliment, though it proved otherwise, in the true Thespian style, exclaimed, "Ay, then no doubt we shall see a Garrick!"

1825.

After several postponements the King's Theatre opened on the 1st of March with Mozart's opera of 'Le Nozze di Figaro.' The return of Mozart's music was like the return of spring weather: it vivified and delighted the senses which had been previously satiated with the continued repetition of Rossini's operas. However admirable, these compositions had at length begun to afford as little gratification as is received by dining every day off the same dish. On Saturday the 19th of March, an opera *semi seria*, in one act, called 'Adelina,' was first performed. The music was composed by Generali. Madame Ronzi de Begnis sang with great delicacy and expression; and

Signor Remorini, who made his first appearance on this occasion, exhibited much vocal and dramatic ability. The melodies of this opera are graceful and pleasing, and the harmonies are frequently scientific and effective. Madame Pasta, who was engaged for a limited number of nights, appeared on the 10th of May again in Rossini's serious opera 'Otello.' She was on her *entrée* greeted with universal plaudits, and she was applauded throughout the opera. Before the curtain fell 'God save the King' was sung in honour of his Majesty's birthday. Signor Velluti made his first appearance in England June 25, in Meyerbeer's opera, 'Il Crociato in Egitto,' the part of Armando in which had been written expressly for that singer. The style of Velluti, though somewhat florid, displayed great cultivation and expression; but his voice at times exhibited defects which were repulsive to musical ears, and occasioned some disapprobation. His performance, however, was for the most part much applauded. The music of this opera, though defective in its general construction, is rich in melody and science, and consequently it was greatly admired.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced this season on the 23rd of February, with a selection from Haydn's 'Creation,' Mozart's

‘ Requiem,’ &c., under the direction of Mr. Hawes. In the first act Miss Paton sang ‘ The soldier tired,’ the divisions of which she executed with brilliancy. Miss Graddon sang Bishop’s popular air, ‘ Bid me discourse,’ with great force and sweetness, accompanied by me on the oboe. It was loudly encored, as was Mr. Braham’s Scotch ballad. The oratorios at Drury Lane, under the direction of Mr. Bishop, began on the 25th of February. The oratorios or Lent performances of the present time afford a curious contrast with those which were given fifty years ago: they were then, and for many years afterwards, performances of sacred music in the strictest sense of the word; and not only the performers who assisted in them, but the public also who attended them appeared in mourning dresses. So much fastidiousness did there exist on this head, indeed, that when Giardini, the popular violin player, performed a concerto between the acts of ‘ The Messiah,’ and introduced in it as the subject of his rondo Dr. Arne’s favourite air, ‘ Come, haste to the wedding,’ the audience considering it a novelty fraught with levity, opposed it with such violence, that the greater part could not be heard. The Lent performances of the present day consist chiefly of selections, in which it is not an uncommon thing

to hear a performer sing on the same evening, 'Comfort ye my people,' from the sacred oratorio of 'The Messiah,' and a modern Scottish ballad, made up of—

' Whilst I stray,
Banks of Tay,
Tartan plaid,
Bonny lad !'

In fact they are made up of every sort of song, occasionally interspersed with a few pieces from Handel, merely to save appearances and to keep the Bishop of London aloof.

When these oratorios were in agitation the lessees of Covent Garden Theatre, Mr. C. Kemble, Mr. Willett, and Captain Forbes, through the leader of the band, proposed to the members of the orchestra that, to allow of their being carried on with less risk, they should perform at reduced salaries. This, after some consideration, was agreed to. Whether these oratorios were profitable or not I cannot say ; but at all events the lessees gained a point in being enabled to increase the dividend of the shareholders, who are paid so much for every night there is a performance in the theatre, whereby the value of the shares was enhanced. The return these performers experienced from the lessees was, that the most part of them, and the

best, were dismissed at the end of the season, to make room for musicians of inferior talent on inferior terms.

The concert of Ancient Music commenced on the 16th of February, and the Philharmonic concert on the 23d of the same month. It is remarkable that the nobility appear to be unacquainted with the effects of the orchestra of the latter concert, as there are not more than six titled persons out of upwards of six hundred subscribers to this concert. Madame Catalani gave four concerts, at the Argyll Rooms, previous to her departure for the continent, with an understanding that she would not sing any where else. They were well attended. On the 25th of March a concert was given at the Hanover Square Rooms for the benefit of the Royal Academy of Music, by the pupils of that institution, in a very improved style. Madame Catalani, who was now in reality going to the continent, gave two concerts at the Argyll Rooms, the first of which took place on Friday the 15th of April, and the second, her farewell, on the 22nd of the same month. On the latter occasion she sang Rode's variation, 'God save the King' and 'Rule Britannia.' At the end of the last song, which was loudly encored, she made her obeisance to every part of the audience, and retired amidst universal applause, waving of hand-

kerchiefs by the ladies, and continued cries of bravi. Catalani, who used frequently to say that she could get more money by singing in an English barn than in a continental palace, found these concerts very profitable.

Madame Catalani, during her first engagement at the King's Theatre in the Hay Market, had acquired so much power, that in many instances she dictated even to the proprietor, and, like some of those to whom power is delegated, made an improper use of it. For instance, in the year 1808, when she was in her zenith, she sent to Italy for her brother, Mr. Guillaume Catalani, and placed him in the orchestra of the Opera House, in the arduous situation of first oboe, removing at the same time Mr. Griesbach, a German, who had for several years filled that situation with great ability. Mr. Griesbach, fortunately for Mr. Guillaume Catalani condescended to play the second oboe to him, and even went still further; for when any passages occurred in the operas which Mr. Guillaume Catalani could not execute, as was frequently the case, Mr. Griesbach kindly played them for him. This Mr. Guillaume Catalani, as an oboe player, reminded me of a man I formerly knew, who, in eating asparagus, began at the wrong end. He was not an exotic plant, but a weed of the Italian soil. When Mr. Harris, the

proprietor of the new Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in 1809, engaged Madame Catalani to perform there in Italian operas, in opposition to the King's Theatre, amongst the other stipulations she had made was one whereby her brother was to take my seat in the orchestra of that theatre on the nights she performed. On seeing this announced in one of the morning papers, I instantly notified to Mr. Harris that I would not continue as a performer in his theatre but on an increase of salary, which he at length acceded to. But though the public would not permit Madame Catalani to appear on the English stage in Italian operas, she nevertheless exacted the terms of her engagement—3000*l.* That Italian singers receive in this country enormous sums for their exertions, is well known ; and that they expend very little of it in England, is equally notorious. Madame Catalani, however, was an exception to this rule, as she had lived here on that scale of profusion, that she at length deemed it necessary to make a reform in her household. To convey some idea of her expenditure, it may suffice to state, on the information I received from an intimate friend and countryman of her's, that the charge for porter alone, for the use of her servants in the kitchen, amounted to four guineas per week, being a trifle more than twenty-eight pots per *diem* ! I know

not exactly how many persons, Italian and English, were retained in the service of Madame Catalani, but as her establishment was by no means a large one, I am induced to think that the Italian part of it, under the head of *brown stout*, occasionally indulged with a flask of *lacryma Christi*, and the English with a bottle of royal Geneva. Madame Catalani, in her zenith, in addition to a fine voice, possessed what on the continent is termed a goodly person and a handsome face ; and what rarely occurs amongst *filles d'opera*, her moral character was never sullied by the breath of calumny. Italian or even French beauty, however, cannot be safely placed in competition with that of England. An Englishwoman does not possess the wily cunning of the former, nor the thoughtless levity of the latter, whereby her fascinating beauty, whilst it excites admiration, commands respect.

A new opera, called 'The fall of Algiers,' was performed at Drury Lane Theatre on the 19th of January. In this opera Satio had some music well adapted to his voice, which he sang with much taste, and Miss Stephens had a spirited composition, which she gave with great effect. The music, by Bishop, was much and deservedly applauded. On the 25th of April his Majesty commanded the opera of 'Der Freyschütz,' at

Covent Garden Theatre. On entering his box he was received with loud and continued cheering, and immediately after 'God save the King' had been twice sung, his Royal Highness the Duke of York entered, and took his seat by the King. His Majesty, whose musical taste is infallible, appeared to be much pleased with Weber's charming music. In the morning of that day a general rehearsal of 'Der Freyschütz' took place, for the purpose of making such corrections as might render the performance acceptable to the King. At that rehearsal a German baron introduced himself, being, as he said, authorised by his friend Weber to restore a piece which had been omitted. In this piece was a note of enormous length for the flute, which Mr. Birch, the principal flute-player, said could not be played. "No!" said the baron, "may I ask why?"—"Sir," answered the flutist, "it is so long that I would not attempt it unless you will have a surgeon by, that in case I rupture a blood vessel he may be ready to stop the hemorrhage." That admirable flute-player might with safety have adopted the mode of poor old Schubert, the German bassoon-player, who, at a rehearsal in the same theatre forty years before, having in his part a long holding out note of several bars, which he was unable to sustain, stopped in the middle of it, and on the leader of

the band calling to him “ Hold out that note!” replied in his quiet way, “ It is very easy for you, Mister Baumgarten, to say hold out that note, but who is to find *de vind?*” On the 28th of April was produced at the same theatre the long-promised and anxiously expected new romantic opera in two acts, called ‘ Preciosa, or the Spanish Gipsy,’ composed by Carlo Maria Von Weber. The music of this opera is agreeable, but it displays neither the learning nor the fancy of that great composer’s other works ; nor indeed would the subject admit of bold strokes and flights of fancy. The paucity of musical effect, however, and the want of interest in the drama, caused its total failure. The getting up of this piece was superintended by an insignificant foreigner, deputed by the manager of course, who certainly possessed no musical knowledge whatever, and who, judging by his exterior, I should not hesitate to denominate a little German schneider (tailor).

It is not difficult to a nice observer to discover the professions of men by the cut of their coat or their carriage. The lawyer may be recognised by his fox-like cunning and his forensic wig. The physician, speaking prophetically, by his grave countenance and his creaking shoes. The dancing-master by his soldier-like erectness, and the ungentlemanly turn out of his toes ; and the tailor

by the inanity of his gait and his inseparability from the shop. The following instance of the latter occurred many years ago to a friend and pupil of mine, an officer of the Guards. A Mr. M'Bean, an army tailor, having the contract for making the clothing for the Coldstream regiment, attended, as was customary, on the parade in St. James's Park the morning on which the battalion forming the King's Guard first appeared in their annual new uniforms. On that occasion a field-officer was present to inspect them. While the general, attended by the master-tailor, was passing the line, he pointed out a trifling defect in the waist-coat of the Honourable Captain F——. "Oh, General," said the tailor, "a stitch or two will remedy that in a minute;" and appearing to be at a loss for something, anxiously said to the dashing captain, "Have you got a needle and thread about you?"

The grand musical festival at York, for the benefit of the hospital, &c., commenced on the 12th of September, in York Minster, and was continued the three following days, under the patronage of his Majesty. The performances consisted of selections from the works of Handel, Mozart, Haydn, &c., which were ably sung by Miss Wilkinson, Miss Stephens, Mademoiselle Garcia, Mr. Vaughan, Mr. Braham, Mr. Phillips,

Mr. Sapiro, and others. The band, which was very numerous, consisted chiefly of provincial performers collected from all parts of the surrounding country, who being fortunately blended with a number of the principal musicians from London, (who had the effect of *fuglemen*,) headed by Cramer, the excellent leader, produced an admirable effect. The aisle of York Minster (which is double the length of that of Westminster Abbey) afforded ample space for the company, and was completely filled, on each of the days, with beauty, rank, and fashion.

During my journey to York with a friend, to assist at this music meeting, I was greatly surprised, and subsequently amused, when we were just going to sit down to supper at the inn in Newark, in Nottinghamshire, on a stranger's entering the room, and in a theatrical tone calling out—" Eat no more!" and placing himself at the head of the table, saying to those who were sitting at it—" What will you take?—a leg, or a breast? —What shall I help you to?—a gizzard, wing, or a merry-thought?—Ha! ha! ha! for I am de fat man what slices de beef!" We naturally conceived that he was mad, till we were informed that he was a provincial actor, well known there, going to perform during the races at Doncaster. In the night, when we stopped to change horses,

this hero of the sock and buskin, who was an outside passenger, on alighting exclaimed,—“It is a nipping and an egar air, and I’m sick at heart;” and by a sudden transition gave us a specimen of his vocal powers, by singing—“Take your auld cloak about ye.” While the horses were being put to the coach he gave us a touch of Harlequin, saying, when his exertions were ended, “That is what I call a cheap glass of brandy, for it has answered all the purposes of cognac, and has cost me nothing!” When we stopped in the morning to breakfast, our theatrical friend again did the honours of the table, and, saying he was partial to a raw egg in his tea, desired the waiter to bring some, which being done, he broke one into his own cup, and during the temporary absence of my friend, he broke one into his cup also. In a minute that gentleman returned, and on tasting his tea said with surprise,—“Bless me! what sort of tea is this?”—“Sir,” said the Thespian, “I put a raw egg into my cup, and thinking you might like the same, I popped another into yours. What is sauce for the goose, you know, is sauce for the gander.”—“Yes,” said my friend, “and there is another adage to which some deference is due,—‘Free, but not too free.’” The actor (somewhat confused) was about to explain, when

fortunately the coachman announcing that he was ready, we paid for our meal and proceeded on our journey. Our actor, who had hitherto rode outside, now took a seat within, and continued his eccentricities as if he possessed an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits. We soon afterwards took up a genteel middle-aged female from a handsome house in a village we passed through. This lady, who was going to Doncaster, being polite and communicative, pointed out to us several of the mansions of the nobility and gentry, particularly Belvoir Castle, the superb seat of the Duke of Rutland, of which we had a fine distant view. She also afforded some information relative to the family of its noble possessor; amongst which she stated that Lady E—h, the duke's sister, was married to Mr. D—d, the son of the great London banker. "Right, madam," said our theatrical friend, "the lady made a prudent choice by marrying a banker, for (as is sometimes the case in high life) if she should happen to get on a little too fast, her husband can give her a *check!*!" In this way we arrived at Doncaster, where we lost sight of our amusing, though troublesome companion, and from thence proceeded through Tadcaster, Ferry Bridge, &c., to the ancient city of York, the inconvenience of whose close and narrow streets

is counterbalanced by the grandeur and beauty of its venerable pile, York Minster, which far exceeds all other cathedral churches in England.

The people of Yorkshire have a remarkably broad dialect, and pronounce their words in a very peculiar manner; for instance, for souls, they say *sauls*; for stones, *stauns*; and for tongue, (a fluency of which is so much admired in the ladies,) they say *tong*. Nay, even well educated persons residing in the city of York express themselves in a similar manner. A friend of mine who resided at Doncaster, coming on a visit to London in the year 1792, I introduced him to a glee club, of which I and some theatrical vocalists were members, one of whom was Charles Bannister. This gentleman, whose name was Shovel, was descended from the famous Admiral Shovel, whose ship, with others under his command, was wrecked whilst homeward bound off the Scilly Islands, in the reign of Queen Anne. At supper, there being on the table among others a dish of cured sheeps' tongues, my Doncaster acquaintance addressing Bannister, who headed the table, said, "I will thank you for one of those *tongs*."—"Certainly, sir," replied Bannister in his whimsical manner; "but as they are very small, I would recommend to you to have two, and then you will have a pair of *tongs*, Mr. Shovel!"

1826.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 7th of January, with Meyerbeer's 'Il Crociato in Egitto,' in which Signora Bonini appeared for the first time in England, in the character of Palemida. Her voice would have been full, clear, and well regulated, if it did not possess a tremulousness, the effect of weakness, and it had not great compass or flexibility. Her style, however, was elegant, though, like that of her master (Velluti) it was too florid. A serious opera, never before performed here, was represented on the 21st of February, called 'Teobaldo ed Isolina.' The music was composed by Morlachi. In this opera Velluti's singing appeared to its utmost advantage. His 'Notte tremenda' was universally applauded, as was the duet 'Dolce imagine,' with Signora Bonini, who sang admirably throughout the opera. Madame Pasta (who was engaged for a few nights) appeared on the 22nd of April *once more* in her favourite part of Desdemona, in Rossini's serious opera 'Otello.' As usual, she both acted and sang with great effect, and was loudly applauded. At the end of the opera, by desire of the audience, she came forward once more to receive that reward, which is becoming so common, that it will shortly cease to be a mark of distinction !

The oratorios commenced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 30th of January, with Handel's 'Messiah.' Miss Paton sang 'Rejoice' with uncommon sweetness and brilliancy; and Mr. Graham, in 'Comfort ye my people,' and 'Every valley,' was chaste and impressive. Carlo Maria Von Weber, who had been engaged by the temporary proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre to come to England and compose an opera, and to preside at the performance of it, conducted some selections in that theatre on the 8th of March, from his popular opera 'Der Freyschütz,' making his first public appearance in England on the occasion. On Weber's entrance the audience rose, and the applause was immense. He acknowledged the compliment by repeated bows; and, standing in the front of the singers on the stage, directed the whole of the first part. When Weber retired, the applause and cheering was general from all parts of the theatre.

Crossing Smithfield in my way to Blackfriars Bridge a few weeks before, on a Monday, the great market-day for cattle, and being pursued by an infuriated ox, I took shelter in a shop in King Street, Snow Hill, formerly designated Cow Lane. When my danger from the beast had passed, and I was proceeding towards my destination, I noted a house in that street, (now a manufactory,) in

which I had formerly passed many agreeable hours. This house had been the dwelling of Mr. B—, a common-councilman of large property, in the wine trade, whom, together with his wife, who was very musical, I visited forty years ago. Though the habits of Mr. B— and his wife (who was much younger than her spouse) were very dissimilar, they notwithstanding agreed very well in the main. The old gentleman was devoted to business; his lady to pleasure. He appeared in a plain suit of brown cloth, with a wig of the same colour; she in silks and satins of various hues, and a tete plastered thickly over with Mareshal powder. He walked on foot; she lolled in her carriage. He passed his time in the city, taking care of the main chance; she passed her's in a routine of visiting at the west end of the town. As the fashionable connexions of Mrs. B— extended her aversion increased to leaving her cards at the doors of her distinguished friends, (to the diversion of saucy footmen,) with the 'Cow Lane' address on them. She therefore turned her thoughts to some mode of getting the odious name changed, and knowing the influence she had with her lord, she unceasingly exerted it to accomplish her favourite object. Mr. B—, a quiet man, being well-disposed to accommodate his better half, and not wishing to encounter that

eloquence which would have been sufficient to have constrained Hercules to have “cleft his club, and lit her fire with it,” used all his interest, and at length succeeded in getting the beastly name ‘Cow Lane’ changed to the splendid one of King Street. The exact date of this beginning of civic improvements I cannot state, but the records of the corporation will doubtless show it.

By command of his Majesty, and under the patronage of the royal and noble directors of the concert of Ancient Music at the King’s Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, Handel’s sublime oratorio, ‘The Messiah,’ was performed on the 7th of January, for the benefit of the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians. This performance was given in a style worthy the immortal composer and its illustrious patrons, by a combination of vocal and instrumental talent not to be equalled perhaps in Europe. “The origin of this institution,” says Dr. Burney, in his account of the commemoration of Handel which took place in 1784, “like that of many others, was purely accidental. About a century ago, a celebrated oboe player of the name of Kytch came to England from Germany, whose performance was held in such high estimation, that he was engaged at two or three private parties of an evening to play opera songs, &c., which he executed with exquisite taste and

feeling. But with all the patronage and encouragement that Kytch met with, he (like too many talented men) was very improvident. He neglected his family, then himself, consequently he became totally incapable of appearing before any respectable assembly, and at last he was found one morning breathless in St. James's Market, in a deplorable condition. That great good often arises from partial evil has been verified in this instance. Soon after the death of Kytch, Festing, the celebrated violinist ; Weideman, the flute player (who instructed his Majesty George the Third); and Vincent, the oboe player, were standing at the door of the Orange Coffee-house in the Hay Market, when they observed two very interesting boys driving milch asses, and on inquiring who they were, they proved to be the orphans of the unfortunate Kytch. With a feeling that reflects honour on their memories, they entered into a subscription to rescue the children of their departed brother professor from such a degrading situation ; and on consulting with Dr. Green and several other eminent composers on the necessity of a fund, on a small scale, to alleviate the distress of indigent musicians, their widows and orphans, they established, in April 1738, this society." The first benefit for this society took place in 1739. The performance was 'Alexander's

Feast,' by permission of Mr. Handel, who performed a new concerto on the organ, which he had composed expressly for the occasion. Handel, who came to England in 1710, continued to be a liberal protector of this society, and at his death bequeathed it one thousand pounds. Out of this slender beginning has arisen 'The Royal Society of Musicians,' incorporated in 1790, which by the august and benign patronage of his Majesty George the Third, and his late Majesty George the Fourth, by the subscriptions of the Royal Family, the nobility, and gentry, and its members, by the zeal and attentions of its governors, for the time being, and court of assistants, has snatched from distress many talented professors and their families, who, though they could not "command success," had endeavoured to "deserve it."

The temporary proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, availing themselves of the all-work engagement they had made with Weber the composer, and determining to make the most of him while here, gave, on the 29th of March, the first of a set of concerts on the stage of that theatre before the play began, in which that popular musician presided during the performance of selections from his opera 'Der Freyschütz.' The hacknied uses made of Weber by the managerial

trio brings to mind Little Isaac, the Jew, in ‘*The Duenna*,’ who says, “ As I must pay the musicians, I’m determined to have a tune for my money.” At the same theatre was produced, on the 11th of April, the anxiously-expected new opera, called

‘*Oberon*, or the Elf King’s Oath.’ The music composed by Baron Von Weber, who directed the performance at the piano-forte. The music of this opera is a refined, scientific, and characteristic composition, and the overture is an ingenious and masterly production. It was loudly encored. This opera, however, did not become as popular as that of ‘*Der Freyschütz*.’ The composer of ‘*Oberon*’ survived its production but a short time. He died of consumption on the 5th of June following, at his apartments in Great Portland Street, aged forty. The funeral of this highly-gifted musician took place at the Roman Catholic chapel in Moorfields, on the 21st of the same month, when, after the usual prayers, &c., Mozart’s Requiem was sung by the choir. It was intended, by a committee of his professional friends, to have given in the chapel a grand public musical performance, with the receipts of which, aided by a subscription, they would have raised a monument to his memory ; but that committee understanding, perhaps, more of musical than of church canons, the attempt failed. This failure

is scarcely to be regretted, as the music of the opera of 'Der Freyschütz' will prove a more lasting monument of Weber's genius than the sculptured marble or the splendid dome which would have canopied it.

Many years ago I frequently met in music parties a gentleman holding a lucrative situation under government, at the house of the late Mr. M—r, then member of parliament for the borough of A—n. This gentleman when he died (to prove that he had come in for a share of the cheese parings) bequeathed to his only daughter sixty thousand pounds; which was so settled on her, that if she changed her situation, her husband could not touch a stiver of it. The lady, some time after her father's death, married a captain in the navy, who embarked in a speculation he was unfit for, which proved very inconvenient. A short time afterwards I had occasion to call on a friend of mine, and in the course of our conversation, suddenly recollecting himself, he said—“By the by, I understand that the naval captain is in the Fleet.”—“Well,” said I, “where should a naval captain be but in the fleet?”

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 20th of May. The new managers desirous, I presume, to make the *amende honorable* to the

public for the paucity of vocal and instrumental talent hitherto displayed by them, engaged the following eminent performers: Madame Vestris, Madame Cornega, Miss Stephens, Mr. Braham, Mr. Sinclair, and Signor De Begnis, as singers; Mr. Spagnoletti, to lead the band, and Mr. Bishop, as composer and director. This union of talent, owing to some of these personages not harmonising with the managers, produced little effective novelty. Braham's principal songs of the season were, the old one, 'The Death of Nelson,' and a new one, (intended no doubt as a companion to it,) 'The Death of Weber.' Bishop's talent lay dormant nearly the whole of the season: he produced nothing but a ballad, called 'Buy a broom,' which being a solitary instance of his exertions, did not verify the old adage, "New brooms sweep clean."

At the English Opera House a new grand serious opera called 'The Oracle, or the Interrupted Sacrifice,' being a free translation from Winter's celebrated opera, 'Das Unterbrochene Opferfest,' was produced on the 7th of August. The music of this opera is appropriate and impressive. The concerted pieces display the utmost richness of harmony, and the choruses are grand and effective. Great commendation is due to Mr.

Arnold (the proprietor of the theatre) for giving to the public the productions of such composers as Weber and Winter.

John Crosdill, Esq., the celebrated violoncello player, died in the year 1825. He was unquestionably the greatest player of his time in Europe. When I first came (as I may say) into the musical world, in 1784, I felt much flattered by the friendly attentions I received from him. He introduced me to the late Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam (a director of the concert of Ancient Music), with whom I frequently had the pleasure of dining at the house of Mr. Crosdill, in Titchfield Street. Lord Fitzwilliam (who was fond of travelling) passed much of his time on the continent; but when in England, although he possessed a splendid mansion at Richmond, in Surrey, adorned with a fine collection of pictures, antiques, &c., he usually preferred living in the house of his friend Crosdill. The friendship subsisting between them had originated in early life, whilst boys at Westminster school, and though there was a great disparity between them, the one being heir to a noble title and estate, and the other only a member of the choir of Westminster Abbey, such was the force of early friendship, that it had not up to that time been interrupted. An instance of a similar kind occurred at the

same school, which subsisted during life, between the late Marquis of Salisbury and Sir William Parsons, who also when a boy belonged to the choir of Westminster Abbey. The friendship, however, between Lord Fitzwilliam and Crosdill did not endure to the death of that nobleman ; which is not surprising, the disposition of his lordship being so capricious and uncertain, that he would sometimes suddenly ring his bell after dinner, and order his valet to prepare for a journey to Italy at an early hour the following morning, and actually set out at the appointed time ! His lordship at length became so reserved and shy, that when the late king and queen honoured him by viewing his house, &c. at Richmond, he secluded himself in a private apartment till their Majesties had departed ! Lord Fitzwilliam bequeathed his fine collection of pictures (amongst which are a Venus by Titian, and two Flemish cabinet pictures, representing the shops of a poultorer and a green-grocer, which are inestimable) to the University of Cambridge. Mr. Crosdill retired from the musical profession in the year 1790 ; but continued to be so much attached to it, that he gave frequent music parties, (which were occasionally honoured with the presence of the Prince of Wales,) wherein he performed on the violoncello. For many of the latter years of his life he was domi-

ciliated with his particular friend, B. Thompson Esq., in Grosvenor Square, where, as usual, he gave music parties to his professional and other friends. At one of these, in the year 1813, at his particular request, I accompanied him in a concerto on the violoncello, which he played in a style as animated and finished as ever, to the high gratification of all present, except an Italian singer, who, amidst the admiration generally expressed, being asked what he thought of it, replied, with the utmost nonchalance—"It is very well for an amateur." After the death of his friend Mr. Thompson, he resided at his own house in Berner's Street, and died universally and sincerely regretted, at Escrick in Yorkshire, at the seat of — Thompson, Esq., nephew to his deceased friend. Mr. Crosdill left his fortune to his only son, Lieutenant-Colonel Crosdill, C. B., who, by his father's desire, presented one thousand pounds to the Royal Society of Musicians, of which he had been many years a member.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on Saturday the 2nd of December, with Spontini's celebrated *opera seria*, in three acts, called 'Vestale,' represented for the first time in England on this occasion. In this opera three new performers made their first appearance here, Madame Biagioli, (the *prima donna* from Lisbon,) Signor

D'Angeli, and Signor Giovanola. The first, Madame Biagioli, had an apology made for her in consequence of indisposition, and the two Signori could only be considered as apologies of singers. Caradori, in *Giulia*, sang with the sweetness of a nightingale, and Curioni was as hoarse as a raven. The fine overture and the beautiful instrumental effects in the airs, &c. were greatly admired. On Saturday the 30th of December Paccini's comic opera, called 'La Schiava in Bagdad,' was performed. Signor Zuchelli appeared for the first time in it since four years. Zuchelli had become a singer of uncommon ability. To a fine voice and great expression, he had added a refinement of style which excited general admiration and applause. He was encored in the aria in the second act, which he sang with great brilliancy. Caradori, in her song with an obligato violin accompaniment (ably executed by Spagnolletti) was vehemently applauded. The house was full, and the company were highly fashionable.

1827.

On Saturday the 23rd of February Rossini's opera, 'La Gazza Ladra,' was performed at the King's Theatre, in which Miss Fanny Ayton made her first appearance as *prima donna*. This lady (a native of England) had been studying in Italy.

Her voice is not of the finest quality, but she is an excellent actress, and she gave 'Di piacer' with such spirit and effect, as to elicit a general encore. Zuchelli played Fernando, and restored all the music of the part which had been omitted (for convenience) by others. His singing and acting were greatly applauded. Curioni was also very successful in the part of Gianetto. Mademoiselle Toso made her *début* with uncommon success on the 17th of March, in Rossin's opera 'Pietro l' Eremita.' She possesses an elegant person, and though only nineteen years of age, her style of singing displayed great taste and expression. Madame Pasta reappeared in 'Tancredi.' She was loudly applauded on her *entrée*, and her fine voice never was heard to greater advantage than in the air, 'Di tanti palpiti,' which was encored. Signor Galli made his first appearance in England on the 7th of April, in the opera of 'La Gazza Ladra.' His voice is powerful in the extreme, though not of the best quality. His acting however is excellent.

The oratorios commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 2nd of March, under the direction of Mr. Bishop, and were performed alternately at both the winter theatres. The principal singers, Miss Paton, Miss Stephens, Miss Love, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Braham, were this season all English;

nevertheless, the performances were well attended and deservedly applauded. Mr. Mori performed a violin concerto at the end of the first act admirably. Mr. T. Cooke led the band. The oratorio of ' Palestine,' composed by Dr. Crotch, (music professor, Oxon,) was performed on the 2nd of March at the Hanover Square Rooms, with great success.

The late Charles Knyvett, the admirable teacher and performer on the piano-forte and organ, and one of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, was many years secretary to the Noblemen's Catch Club, held at the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street. He was perhaps the best catch singer in England, evincing in them all the genuine comedy of an Edwin. He was in early life a chorister of Westminster Abbey, and at Westminster school one of those durable early friendships was formed between him and the late Lord Dudley and Ward, which frequently are only terminated by death. Knyvett lived among the higher circles of society and his eminent professional friends, and was for his talent and worth highly esteemed. He informed me the last time I dined with him, that he had ate his Christmas dinner with Lord Dudley and Ward at his lordship's mansion in Park Lane, or at his seat in Worcestershire, for the last twenty-five years ! and

that, by mutual agreement, he was to do the same till death dissolved the meeting. His lordship however was within a few years afterwards summoned from an earthly to a heavenly feast, whither Knyvett, to the regret of his numerous friends, soon followed him. Speaking of Lord Dudley and Ward, reminds me of the melancholy death of his brother-in-law, Colonel Bosville of the Guards, to whom, from my intimacy with Colonel Freemantle of the same regiment, (the Coldstream,) I had been introduced. When the war broke out in Flanders in the year 1793, many of the officers of the Guards volunteered, and amongst those selected for that service were Colonels Freemantle and Bosville. They were both full of military ardour, and at their mess-dinners amused themselves with jests on the chances of war. Colonel Bosville being very tall, (standing six feet and an inch,) Colonel Freemantle said good-humouredly to him,—“ When you go into battle, Bosville, be sure to keep your head down, or you will be popped off presently, while a little fellow, such as I am, may escape without injury.” These pleasantries, although they excited nothing but a laugh, proved however prophetic, for Colonel Bosville, in the first engagement he was in, was shot through the head, and instantly expired :—“ the paths of glory lead but

to the grave." As I am on a military subject, I will observe, that when the first battalion was quartered in the Tower, I went there twice a week to breakfast at the officers' mess, and afterwards to give Colonel Freemantle lessons on the German flute, an instrument on which he played admirably. While I was in this habit I was warmly pressed to dine at the mess-dinner at the Coal Exchange Tavern in Thames Street. It happened, however, that on the appointed day we performed an opera at Covent Garden Theatre, which fortunately prevented my attending. I say fortunately, because I learnt shortly afterwards that the custom on those occasions was, when a man had drank till he fell from his chair, (to which he was excited by the number of toasts given,) to lay him out like a corpse on the floor in the further part of the room, with a sheet spread over him, and a burning candle placed on each side of his head, till he was sufficiently recovered to be sent home in a coach, with a couple of crack grenadiers to take care of him !

The pupils of the Royal Academy of Music performed a concert of vocal and instrumental music on the 3d of February, in which they gave ample proof of improvement to a numerous and approving assemblage of the friends and patrons of the institution. The concert of Ancient Music

commenced at Hanover Square on the 7th of March, and the Philharmonic concert at the Argyll Rooms on the 19th of February. The latter opened with Beethoven's fine symphony, 'L' Ernica,' the middle movement of which is a 'Marcia funebre,' highly descriptive of a departed hero. It was performed to the memory of his late Royal Highness the Duke of York, who departed this life on the 5th of January. It had a fine and appropriate effect.

The late Duke of York, though not exactly what might be termed a musical amateur, occasioned a great revolution in military music. The bands of the three regiments of Guards, about the year 1783, consisted of only eight performers, viz. two oboes, two clarionets, two French-horns, and two bassoons, selected from the King's and the patent theatres. They were excellent performers on their several instruments, were hired by the month, and were well paid. They were not attested, and were exempt from all military duties except that of the King's Guard, which they played from the parade at the Horse Guards in St. James's Park to the court-yard of the Palace one morning, and back again from the Palace to the Horse Guards on the following day. The first idea of having a band of foreigners arose out of the following circumstance:—About the

year 1783, the present venerable Lord Cathcart came from one of the regiments of the line to be a lieutenant-colonel in the Coldstream Guards, then commanded by the Duke of York. His lordship not being aware that the engagement of the band of that regiment was very different to that of the marching regiment he had left, on one occasion desired them to attend him and a party of his friends to play during an aquatic excursion he had formed to Greenwich. This being incompatible with their respectable musical engagements, was declined by them; and as the officers (who subscribed to pay the bands of the Guards) became desirous of having one which they could command on all occasions, a letter was by general consent written to the Duke of York, then in Germany, stating their wish; to which his Royal Highness assenting, a band of Germans, on an extended scale, according to the military fashion of that country, was formed by their agents and sent to England to supersede the British musicians. This arrangement, however, coming prematurely to the knowledge of the English band, by the regimental instrument maker mentioning that he had been employed to prepare a set of instruments for their foreign rivals, and having waited on General T—y to ascertain the truth of it, they instantly resigned their situations, and left

the regiment to do duty with the best band it could on the emergency collect. This German band on its arrival, consisted of twenty-four in number ; viz. clarionets, oboes, French-horns, flutes, bassoons, trumpets, trombones, and serpents, and was ably conducted by its master, Mr. Eley, a gentleman subsequently well known as a man of ability in the musical profession. It should also be observed, that the band included three black men, two of whom carried tambourines, and the third the Turkish bells. An instance of the ferocity of one of those Africans occurred within two years after his coming to England. One of the Germans, whilst attending with the others to play to a party of distinction on the water, having entered into a dispute with one of the blacks, the latter suddenly sprang upon the white man, and, according to the custom of his country, having firmly implanted the fingers of both hands on each side of his head, with his two thumbs would have squeezed his eyes in, had he not been forced away by his comrades. This act of violence being subsequently represented to the commanding officer, the savage received that punishment which subdued his national fury ever afterwards. This band became very popular, and attracted crowds of persons to St. James's Park to listen to its performances. It may be worthy

of remark that the Africans, who appear generally to have a natural disposition for music, produced such effect with their tambourines, that those instruments afterwards, under their tuition, became extremely fashionable, and were cultivated by many of those belles of distinction who were emulous to display Turkish attitudes and Turkish graces. The death of his Royal Highness the Duke of York was universally regretted. He was a prince of a benevolent nature, and the suavity of his manners obtained for him general admiration. As commander-in-chief of the British forces, he was the soldier's friend, and as such, his loss was sincerely lamented by the whole army. Amongst the general expressions of grief on the Duke's demise, the following curious ebullition, in broken English, proceeded from the mouth of the French man cook attached to the establishment of his Royal Highness : “ Ah ! mon Praince, you will meess me vary moch where you are gone to !”

That great master of harmony, Beethoven, died on the evening of the 26th of March. He had laboured under a painful disease for several months prior to his dissolution, and his funds being almost the antipodes to his genius, the members of the Philharmonic concert in London, greatly to their honour, transmitted to him one hundred pounds. Beethoven's acknowledg-

ment of the receipt of this mark of their regard was honourable to his feelings.

A new opera was brought out at Drury Lane Theatre on the 27th of January, called 'Englishmen in India ;' the music of which was composed by Bishop. The quintet at the end of the first act, and the finale of the second, imitating the effect of an echo, are tasteful and masterly compositions. The whole was received with general applause. At the same theatre Rossini's 'Turco in Italia,' adapted for the English stage, was, under the title of 'The Turkish Lovers,' performed for the first time on the 1st of May. In this opera Miss Fanny Ayton made her *début* on her native boards with great success. She played the part with the same *naïveté* which gained her general approbation on the Italian stage. Braham played the character of the 'Turk,' and sang his airs with great energy and effect. The overture was encored, and the whole of the music was greatly applauded. Braham has husbanded his vocal powers with great care ; for, though more than forty years "has o'er him roll'd" since he first appeared on the stage of Covent Garden Theatre (in 1787), in the character of 'Shepherd Joe' in 'Poor Vulcan,' for the benefit of his master, Leoni, he still maintains the pre-eminence he has long enjoyed, and is entitled to the com-

pliment that was bestowed on a late celebrated comic actress. T——d, who attended at the head of the police when their late Majesties visited the theatres, being on one of those occasions behind the scenes of that of Covent Garden, while the late admirable actress Mrs. Mattocks was performing, turning to Lewis, (the stage-manager,) said, with great energy,—“That’s a clever little woman ; she has been on the stage more than forty years to my knowledge, and yet how well she acts ! Sir, she’s a perfect *pro-gi-dy* !”

I was a few years ago acquainted with a musical clergyman named Cassoc ; a very appropriate name, by the by, for a member of the church. This gentleman, who was an enormous eater, was a short, thin, cadaverous man, with only one eye : notwithstanding, few, if any of his friends, could get on the blind side of him. Parson Cassoc, as he was by his acquaintance familiarly called, was of so parsimonious a disposition that, to save expense, he contrived to take a dinner with one or other of his friends every day in the week, Sundays not excepted. Amongst these was an elderly lady who had been acquainted with him for many years. This lady, considering the parson to be possessed of considerable property, and without a relative to bequeath it to, was particularly attentive to him, and received him at her table, where

I first met him, very frequently, flattering herself that she should thereby be made his heir, and even occasionally jocosely dropped hints to him to that effect; which the parson playing up to, heightened her expectation, whilst it insured to him a continuation of her hospitalities. I have several times met the reverend gentleman at the house of the before-mentioned lady, where, like Captain Dalgetty, in Sir Walter Scott's "Tale of Montrrose," he ate as if he was taking in a stock of food sufficient for three days, and at the same time with so little observance of delicacy, that it appeared to be doubtful whether he, or those who witnessed his exertions would be sick first. The parson being at length taken seriously ill, the lady increased her attentions to him, till he shortly afterwards gave up the ghost, when she felt assured of being rewarded according to her expectations. On the will of the parson however being produced and read, to her great surprise, it appeared that his reverence had died worth upwards of three thousand pounds, and that he had bequeathed the whole of it to two illegitimate children he had, which the lady, or any of his other intimate friends, had never heard of!

The manager of the English Opera House revived, on the 2nd of July, Dryden's celebrated opera in three acts, called 'Arthur and Emeline.'

The music was selected from the masterly compositions of Purcell, by Mr. Hawes, and was produced under his direction. It abounds in beautiful melodies and fine choruses. Among the airs, (which are few,) 'To arms, your ensigns straight display,' (admirably sung by Pearman,) was universally applauded, as was indeed the whole of the piece. At Covent Garden Theatre a new grand opera, called 'The Seraglio,' the music partly taken from Mozart's opera, 'Entföhrt aus dem Serail,' by Mr. Cramer, was produced on the 24th of November. In this opera Miss Hughes sang a plaintive air in the second act, and a bravura in the third, in a style of superior excellence. Madame Vestris gave Pedrillo's romance admirably, and obtained the only encore of the evening. An air of Mozart's was sung by Mr. Sapiro with much taste. It is to be regretted that this excellent singer is deficient in that essential requisite, a good shake, as there are few instances in the English style of stage-singing of vocalists making their closes in a finished manner without it. It has been jocosely said that a singer cannot come out of a song, any more than a dog out of the water, without a good shake. At Drury Lane Theatre a new opera, founded on Storace's 'Pirates,' (as far as the music goes,) called 'Isidore de Merida, or the Devil's Creek,'

was brought out on the 29th of November. In this opera Madame Feron (Mrs. Glossop), lately returned from Italy, made her *début*. Her first song, which she gave with great spirit, was much applauded; but in the well-known ballad, 'The lullaby,' (in which the late Signora Storace enraptured the public,) she was not so successful. The rest of her songs were well received, particularly some variations on a Neapolitan air, in which she was loudly encored. This opera went off with complete success. Madame Feron (as Miss Feron) began her musical career at Vauxhall Gardens at the time when I became a composer for them, in the year 1808. I composed many songs for her; and observing the bent of her genius, gave her 'The triple courtship,' in which she whimsically and admirably described her three lovers, a soldier, a quaker, and a sailor; and 'The Romp, or the Great Catalani.' These were both acting songs, and (by my advice) she sang them without a book in her hands, a thing never before known in those gardens. They were both tumultuously encored, and in them she displayed powers which marked her for future excellence. During the period I composed for Vauxhall Gardens I produced one hundred and fifty vocal pieces, consisting of bravuras, comic acting songs, ballads, duets, finales, &c., (admirably

sung by Mrs. Bland, Miss Feron, Miss Mathews, Mr. C. Taylor, Mr. Dignum, &c. &c.) besides a number of songs in various styles, for that great singer Mrs. Dickons, which were sung by her at Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres, the oratorios, the Hanover Square concerts, and the Dublin Theatre. These, with about one hundred more, composed for the principal music-sellers, are all published.

Charles Incledon, who for twenty-four years had sung with the utmost approbation at Covent Garden Theatre, &c., died at Worcester on the 14th of February, 1826. He had been, when a boy, one of the choristers of the cathedral at Exeter, under Mr. Jackson, its clever organist and composer. During that time, the son of one of the dignitaries of the church having committed an offence which the evidence of Incledon might have proved, he was taken on board a ship-of-war to the West Indies, and fought in the engagement which took place in the year 1782, between the French fleet commanded by Count de Grasse, and the English fleet under the command of Admiral Sir George Bridges (afterwards Lord) Rodney, in which the latter gained a splendid victory. Circumstances at length requiring no further restraint, Incledon was set at liberty, and became a singing actor at the Southampton and

Bath Theatres. In the year 1786 he was engaged at Vauxhall Gardens, and in the year 1790 he made his first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of Dermot in the ' Poor Soldier,' with complete success. Incledon's fine clear, powerful voice, perfect ear, and finished shake, together with the advantage of Mr. Shield composing for him in the new operas brought out, made him so popular, that for several years he travelled in the summer, and at every considerable town in England gave an entertainment, consisting of recitation and songs (on Dibdin's plan), with great applause and profit. As a ballad singer he was unrivalled, and his manner of singing sea songs, particularly Gay's ' Black-eyed Susan,' ' The storm,' by Alexander Stevens, and Shield's ' Heaving of the lead,' can only be properly appreciated by those who have heard him sing them. Incledon was a very eccentric character: he was at times extremely irritable, and very good-tempered, careful of his money, and very extravagant; and though he evinced a strong propensity to wine, he never appeared to be intoxicated by it. Dining with a party at his house, when he had just recovered from a very severe indisposition, and was, as he said, advised by his physician to be very abstemious, he, some time after dinner, while his friends were drinking

port wine, had a second black bottle placed before him, which I conceived to contain some very light beverage suited to his case, till he said to me, in an under voice, “ Bill, take a glass of this” (pointing to his black bottle); which I did, and found it to be Madeira! Amongst other singularities, Incledon was restless, and could not stay long in a place. Having, with his wife, dined at my house, in the evening, whilst the party were engaged at cards, he absented himself for a considerable time, and Mrs. Incledon noticing it particularly, I was induced to go and look for him; and tracing him by his voice, found him in the kitchen, helping the maids to pick parsley which was preparing for supper! In the year 1815, having a difference with Mr. Harris, he withdrew from Covent Garden Theatre, and soon afterwards took a parting benefit at the Italian Opera House, at play-house prices, assisted by many of his brethren of both theatres, myself among the number, to a house filled to an excess that proved how highly his talent was appreciated. He subsequently went to perform in North America; but his powers being then considerably diminished, his trip did not prove a very profitable one. On his return to England, he retired to reside at Brighton, where he was afflicted with a slight paralytic affection, from the effects of which he

recovered ; and in February, 1826, being at Worcester, he experienced a second attack, which proved fatal, in the 68th year of his age. His remains were carried from Worcester to Highgate, near London, where they were interred.

1828.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 26th of January, under the direction of Monsieur Laporte, when Madame Pasta again appeared in the favourite opera ' Tancredi.' She, *as usual*, delighted the audience, and was, *as usual*, enthusiastically applauded. After the curtain fell she was called for, *as usual*, to go through the ceremony of being unmercifully applauded. It might be thought that extreme and continued praise would produce satiety in an opera singer, were it not known that vanity feels "an increase of appetite by what it feeds on." Madame Schutz appeared, for the first time in England, in Mozart's serious opera ' La Clemenza di Tito,' on Saturday the 1st of March. The voice of that lady is a mezzo soprano of a rather powerful and rich quality ; but she is deficient in expression. In some scenes, however, she was very successful. On Tuesday, the 15th of April, Mademoiselle Sontag made her first appearance in England, in Rossini's opera ' Il Barbiere di

Siviglia.' The voice of Mademoiselle Sontag is a soprano : it is full, clear, and sweet, and her taste is very highly cultivated. In the cavatina, ' Una voce puoco fa,' she introduced two staccato passages, which she executed with surprising rapidity and neatness of articulation ; and in the music lesson of the second act she sang Rodes' variations, particularly that in arpeggios, in a style superior to Catalani. At the close of the opera she was loudly called for, when she came forward again, and was greeted with acclamation. The staccato style of singing, hitherto ridiculed by the Italians, first introduced on the opera stage by Mademoiselle Sontag, which so fascinated the audience, was practised with equal success fifty years ago, at Covent Garden Theatre, by a popular singer named Miss Catley. That lady, who was a prodigious favourite with the public, sang the whole of Fischer's minuet staccato, in the burlesque opera of ' Tom Thumb,' first performed 1780, with most extraordinary power of voice and articulation, and in it was at all times vehemently encored. The art of being twice encored was at that time unknown. This popular singer had got such complete hold⁴ of the public, that on an orange being thrown on the stage from the gallery while she was performing, she took it up, and showing it to the audience, observed, " This is

not a civil (Seville) orange!" And, on another occasion, when one of her songs was encored, she turned round and curtsied with her back to the audience, amidst peals of laughter and applause.

The King's Theatre closed for the season on the 2nd of August, with the serious opera 'Medea.' Pasta sang with the utmost taste, animation, and feeling in the part of Medea, and at the conclusion of the opera was called for from every part of the house. On her reappearance, wreaths of roses were thrown on the stage, and she was greeted with the strongest expressions of admiration. These strewments are, I presume, in the frozen months, made with artificial flowers.

James Hook, the admired composer, died at Boulogne in the year 1827. He was born at Norwich in 1746, and was instructed in the first principles of music by Mr. Garland, an organist in that city. His early attachment to that art by which he rendered himself so popular in this country, was not more remarkable than the immense number of his musical productions. These, which amount to more than a hundred and forty complete works, consist chiefly of musical entertainments for the theatres, organ concertos and sonatas, and duets for the piano-forte, an excellent instruction book for that instrument, intitled ' *Guida Musica*, ' an oratorio, called ' *The Ascen-*

sion,' composed in 1776, and more than two thousand songs. Shortly after Mr. Hook's first arrival in London he was engaged at Mary-le-bone Gardens ; and being subsequently invited to accept a similar situation at Vauxhall Gardens, he became organist and composer there, and filled those important offices betwixt forty and fifty years. As an organ player Mr. Hook highly excelled, and his organ concertos (one of which he performed every night at Vauxhall) evinced much science, taste, and execution. As a composer he was for many years extremely popular ; and for natural and pleasing melodies in his songs, &c. he has not perhaps been surpassed. He was formerly for several years organist of St. John's Church, Horselydown. His time was a good deal taken up in teaching the piano-forte, by which his income was greatly extended, and to my knowledge his annual receipts from only two schools, one at Chelsea and the other at Stepney, were six hundred pounds. Mr. Hook had been twice married. His first wife, whose maiden name was Madden, was the daughter of an officer in the British service. She was a genteel and accomplished lady, and greatly excelled as an artist in miniature painting. She was the authoress of the successful operatic piece performed at Drury Lane Theatre in the year 1784, intitled ' The Double Disguise.' Mr.

Hook had by his first wife two sons, the late Reverend Dr. Hook, prebendary of Winchester, and the present Mr. Theodore Hook, the author of several popular dramas. Hook was a very agreeable companion, displayed some wit, and had a happy knack of punning, which could not be exceeded even by Tom Dibdin.

The first of the Lent performances called oratorios, though no longer possessing that character, except at the beginning, commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 27th of February with 'The Messiah.' From the motley character these performances have assumed, they have for several years been on the decline, and their failure has been accelerated perhaps by the character of some of the parts of which they are composed being such as to exclude that vast portion of the public denominated Methodists, who, though they can attend performances of what is understood to be sacred music, will not listen to the frivolous ballads continually sung in them by our most popular singers, some of whom will sing any production, Scotch, English, or Irish, provided the composer or publisher will pay them down a sum of money more or less exorbitant! This expensive system, which originated in the backwardness of the lovers of music to buy songs, however good, that had not been sung in public, has at

length been partially superseded by the new mode of heading them with a cheap lithographic engraving, which causes them to be purchased with avidity !

When I came into the principal line of the musical profession there was a degree of liberality amongst the singers which did them honour. If solicited to exert their talents for the benefit of a charity, they would have blushed at the thoughts of accepting any fees for their services ; and if an individual case of distress was to be relieved, they were promptly embodied in its cause. That such was the practice during many years, I have reflected on with a satisfaction which has of late been mingled with regret, owing to that custom having considerably declined. The following instance of generosity, however, induces a hope that the good old custom may hereafter be restored to its pristine vigour. In the year 1826 the directors of a small chapel in Chelsea determined on giving a little sacred music on a certain morning, for the benefit of their infant Sunday school, and being desirous of going to the fountain-head for a singer, they applied to Mr. ——, who demanded and subsequently received for his exertions twenty guineas ! When the performance was ended, however, and his fee had become tangible, Mr. —— expressed a desire to see the young Christians, to whom,

“ with a heart and hand open as day to melting charity,” he generously presented five shillings!

To pay twenty guineas for a song or two exquisitely sung by an accomplished and delicate female vocalist may, perhaps, be worth the purchase; but to reward “ a robust-pated fellow” with so exorbitant a sum appears to me to be monstrous.

The concert of Ancient Music commenced at the Hanover Square Rooms on the 5th of March, and the Philharmonic concert at the Argyll Rooms on the 25th of February. At the latter Mr. Oury played a concerto on the violin. His performance was highly finished, his upper notes being perfectly in tune almost up to the bridge of the instrument. What would the eccentric Tom Collet have said could he have heard it? Collet, an excellent leader and violin player of his day, led the orchestra of Vauxhall Gardens in the year 1745, and had such an aversion to playing high, that he dismissed one of his violin performers for flourishing on the half shift; viz. one note above the confined compass of that time. Although this gentleman, who was a great pigeon-fancier, did not go aloft on the fiddle, he went every day up to the top of his house to see his pigeons fly, and on one occasion he was so lost in admiration of them, that while clapping his hands and walking back-

wards, he walked over the leads of the house, and in the fall must have been dashed to pieces, had not his clothes been caught by a lamp-iron, to which he remained suspended (more frightened than hurt) until taken down by the passers by.

At Covent Garden Theatre Madame Sala made her second appearance on the 4th of January, as the Countess, in Mozart's adapted opera of 'The Marriage of Figaro.' She again sang the orginal airs of Mozart with taste and feeling. The letter-duet was admirably sung by her and Madame Vestris. On the former representation Madame Vestris incurred the displeasure of the audience, by introducing into Mozart's opera that silly trash of a ballad 'I've been roaming.' That the public had not sooner reprehended this system appeared to me extraordinary; for, during many years before, the introductions into our operas, however inappropriate, have been so numerous, that in some instances scarcely any of the original airs have been preserved. Indeed this absurd practice has been lately carried so far, that at one of our minor theatres a performer, in imitation of his betters, acting the part of a Turk, sang Davy's well-known song, ' May we ne'er want a friend or a bottle to give him ! ' I need not add, the better to prove the absurdity of this, that the Turks are strictly forbidden by their religion to use wine. The

active manager of the Theatre Royal English Opera House brought out on the 29th of July an English version of Mozart's comic opera 'Cosi fan Tutte,' called 'Tit for Tat, or the Tables Turned.' In this opera the singing of Phillips was generally applauded, and the efforts of Madame Feron were lively and pleasing, and her songs highly effective. Mozart's charming music was listened to with great delight, and its various beauties were rapturously applauded.

I once knew a theatrical manager who was as proud and as despotic as a Sultan. He could not, it is true, deprive his subjects of life, but he could take from them the means by which they lived. This manager exercised his authority with such *hauteur*, that his actors appeared like mere serfs depending on his will; and though not a prince, he fancied himself equal to one, and expected the same homage; whilst his house, his gilded roofs and splendid furniture, corresponded with his assumption. His servants approached him with more fear than affection, and his pride never relaxed sufficiently to admit genius in the profession by which he lived to participate in the hospitalities of his august table. He moved like that meteor, the 'Will o' the wisp,' exciting some surprise, but surely no admiration. In his theatre a system of *espionnage* prevailed, and to

those who evinced any antipathy to his rule, punishments in this or that form were awarded, whilst, like the Sicilian tyrant of old, he felt pleasure in listening to their complaints. When he entered his theatre, his parasites displayed their respect by servility, and when he made his appearance on the stage at rehearsals, the performers, with some exceptions, who were perhaps amusing themselves in harmless pleasantries with each other, became instantly dumb-struck. The sycophants surrounding an eastern despot were never more anxious than they to catch a look from the great man, who, by dispensing a smile, a nod, or (*his ne plus ultra*) a squeeze of the little finger, rendered those conspicuous to whom such favors were dispensed. A theatre, though a world in which actors of talent can acquire the means of procuring the comforts of life, seldom allows the enjoyment of them. This manager was never long satisfied with a performer even of superior ability : for dreading that success might render him presumptive, a thing not to be endured, or induce him to entertain a hope of obtaining an increase of salary, he, the manager, after having skimmed the cream off his services, brought forward from a provincial theatre another in the same line, on less terms, to supplant him. If this conduct on the part of the manager disgusted the actor of talent,

and he at the expiration of his term seceded, under an idea that he might be engaged, and more liberally treated at a rival theatre, he found too late that, by a private treaty, neither one nor the other could retain those performers who had, under such circumstances, withdrawn themselves. Another evil under which the performers laboured was the influence the manager had acquired in certain newspapers, whereby he could secretly uphold one to the depreciation of another. In order to show that missives were forwarded from the theatre, I will cite the following case out of others I could produce to prove it: A lady in the comic singing line being brought out in opposition to an established favourite with the public, who had a good salary, two articles were sent under the care of a servant of the theatre, to a diurnal print devoted to the interests of the manager. One of these was intended as a puff for the new singer, the other for the bottom of the advertisement, announcing the different plays to be performed during the week, when, by an unlucky mistake, the puff, “Mrs. M—s is the finest breeches figure seen for many years!” was placed at the bottom of the list of plays to be acted, instead of being introduced among the news as a paragraph! As a proof of the gratitude of this same manager, it will be sufficient to state, that he subsequently

borrowed a thousand pounds, without interest, of the before-mentioned lady who was to have been supplanted, and at the end of the same season in which he had received the money, he returned the obligation by reducing her salary three pounds per week!!! This system, however, though bad enough, might be still more grating if an actor became manager; for in that case, in addition to the evils before enumerated, performers of superior talent might experience the mortification of being domineered over by one of inferior ability, who, by getting up obsolete plays to show himself to advantage, and, in defiance of his grey hairs, engrossing all the youthful parts, might occasion the public to lose their zest for the theatre, the benches and treasury to be empty, and the numerous creditors to be clamorous, till at length ruin pervades the concern, and no chance remains but that of publicly soliciting charitable aid to enable it to “keep moving!”

The musical festival at York commenced on the 23d of September, on the same grand scale as formerly. The first performance in the Minster was a selection, in which Madame Catalani (who received six hundred guineas for her services) sang ‘Luther’s Hymn,’ and ‘Angels ever bright and fair.’ Braham (who received two hundred and fifty pounds) gave ‘Sound an alarm;’ Madame

Caradori, 'Tune your harps;' Miss Stephens, 'The glorious hierarchy,' from Haydn's 'Creation;' and Miss Paton, 'If guiltless blood.' The whole of these admirable singers gave their several airs with great effect; and although there could not be any clapping of hands in the cathedral, the countenances of the auditors evinced the high gratification they had experienced. The Minster was well filled, and the *coup d'œil*, on entering the venerable building, was truly magnificent, it having been fitted up with great taste, without infringing on its sacred character. The band, led by F. Cramer, consisted of six hundred, two hundred and fifty of whom were instrumental, and three hundred and fifty vocal performers! Amongst the instrumental performers from London were, Messrs. Lindley, Dance, Harpur, Wilman, Dragonetti, Mori, Nicholson, and others. The evening concerts were given in the great Assembly Room, and were brilliantly attended. In addition to the above-mentioned singers, at the evening concerts were Madame Stockhausen, a German lady, and Signor De Begnis, from the King's Theatre, both of whom sang with great effect, and Messrs. Mori and Nicholson played solos on the violin and flute. A notice was sent by the managing committee of gentlemen, requesting the public not to encore. They had perhaps forgotten that, with singers, the

hope of experiencing that distinction is the stimulus to extraordinary exertion, or they probably had some suspicion that double encores were intended to be got up, whereby the evening performances would have been prolonged to so late an hour as would have prevented the company rising in time to be present at the following morning's performances in the Minster.

The musical festival at Manchester followed that of York, and commenced on the 30th of September. The first performance was in the collegiate church in the morning. Madame Catalani, Madame Stockhausen, Miss Stephens, Mr. Braham, and Miss Paton, sang nearly the same pieces as at York. The evening concerts were given in the theatre, during which Madame Catalani sang 'Rule Britannia,' Miss Paton, 'Savourneen Delish' (enthusiastically encored), Miss Stephens, 'I've been roaming,' Madame Stockhausen, a Swiss air (greatly applauded), Miss Love, a ballad (loudly encored), and Mr. Braham, a scena from 'Oberon.' Both the church and the theatre were well attended, and the performances were given in a style of superior excellence. Mademoiselle Sontag having been applied to to sing at the musical festival at York of this year, gave in her terms, which were twelve hundred pounds for the four days' performances, being within a trifle

(thirty pounds) of double the sum which Catalani received for coming purposely from Paris to attend it ; and to render the thing complete, she named two hundred pounds more for Mr. Pixis, (a piano-forte player, who had lately arrived from Germany as her *accompagnatore*, and who had given a sort of piebald concert at the Opera House,) to accompany her in her songs. What had become of those great piano-forte players, J. Cramer, Neate, Potter, and Moscheles ? Either of them would have done it as well at least as Mr. Pixis ; and at most, for half the sum. I cannot tell what ideas these persons had formed of the English people ; but of this I am confident, that in their own country, or in any other on the continent, they would be well content to receive a moiety of the money they exact in this. To prove the truth of what I advance, it is only necessary to observe, that Mademoiselle Sontag, after having dried up the springs of gain at the fountain-head of London, found it convenient to engage herself permanently as first singer in the chapel of the King of Prussia, at a yearly salary of twenty thousand francs (840*l.* sterling) ; only a trifle more for a year than two-thirds of the sum which she had previously demanded to sing at York for four days ! I will only ask, as the performances at York were given for the benefit of cha-

ritable institutions, what feelings could this brace of foreigners possess, who would by such selfish and exorbitant demands deprive the poor, the sick, and the helpless orphan, of that aid which humanity, through the attractive channels of music, sought to afford them ?

At the English Opera House the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music made their first dramatic attempt on Monday the 8th of December, in Rossini's Italian comic opera, 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia.' The theatre had been fitted up the preceding year for the French company of actors, and the subscription boxes were filled by the distinguished patrons of the Academy. The Duchess of Kent and party occupied the King's box, and the pit was completely filled by respectable company, attracted by the novelty of the exhibition. The following is a list of the young *débutants*, who were aided only by Signor De Begnis, their dramatic instructor, who himself undertook the part of Figaro :—

Rosina,	-	-	Miss Childe.
Berta,	-	-	Miss Bromley.
Count D'Almaviva,			Mr. Brizzi.
Bartolo,	-	-	Mr. A. Sapiro.
Basilio,	-	-	Mr. E. Seguin.
Fiorello,	-	-	Mr. F. Smith.

Conductor, - Mr. C. F. Packer.

Leader of the Band, Mr. C. A. Seymour.

The orchestra was composed of thirty-five other instrumental performers, all of whom were pupils of the Academy. Miss Childe's performance as Rosina was very promising. Her airs, 'Una voce,' and 'Dunque io sono,' were sung with much delicacy and expression. The latter was encored. Miss Bromley, in the part of Berta, had but one song, which was unanimously encored. Her acting displayed great natural aptitude, and was very effective. The part of the Count is a difficult one; but it was very well sustained by Mr. Brizzi. Messrs. A. Sapiro and Seguin were tolerably effective. De Begnis was all life and humour as the barber, and as profuse as usual in the liberties he takes in that character. The overture was well performed, and was encored; and the orchestra gave the accompaniments throughout the opera with great precision. The performance on the whole was superior to any thing that could have been expected from a first effort, and afforded great satisfaction to the audience. On Thursday the 18th of December the pupils performed in Rossini's opera, 'L' Inganno Felice.' At the conclusion of the opera Miss Childe, Messrs. Seguin and A. Sapiro, ac-

cording to the Italian opera fashion, were called for, and on their appearing were vehemently applauded. The third and last performance was on Saturday the 20th of December, when Rossini's 'Barbiere di Seviglia' was repeated in a greatly improved style. The experiment having been made, it is to be hoped that, by attention and perseverance on the parts of the pupils and masters, we may at no very distant period have an Italian opera by English performers, of such excellence as will at least moderate the demands made by Italian singers, which at present operate equally to the injury of the proprietor, as to all the other departments of the King's Theatre.

1829.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on Saturday the 31st of January, with Rossini's favourite opera, 'La Donna del Lago,' (the Lady of the Lake,) under the management of Monsieur Laporte, and the direction of Monsieur Bochsa. The dissatisfaction which had been expressed by the erection of new private seats in the pit, called stalls, (a very ungraceful name by the by, and difficult to separate from oil-cakes,) the loss of several of the principal performers in the orchestra, Messrs. Lindley, Wilman, Nicholson, Harpur, &c., on account of the reduction of their salaries, and the

importation of lots of Frenchmen from Paris to succeed them, induced many amateurs of theatrical rows to expect an opposition. The audience remained quiet, however, till the orchestra began to play the overture, when several persons called "Off! off!" and began to hiss. The attempt, however, was feeble, and the new French instrumentalists concluded amidst a mixture of applause and disapprobation. The new singers engaged were Madame Pisaroni, from the Italian Theatre in Paris, and Mademoiselle Monticelli, from the theatre of Milan, and Signor Donzelli. Madame Pisaroni, as Malcolm Graeme, experienced a very flattering reception. Her voice (a fine contr'alto) soon excited the admiration of the audience. She was loudly applauded and several times encored. She has not the astonishing powers Catalani formerly had, but she sings with great taste and expression. In the air, 'Elena, oh tu io chiamo,' she was vehemently applauded. Mademoiselle Monticelli sustained the part of Ellen. She is a fine woman, and her voice is pleasing. Signor Donzelli, as Roderick Dhu, displayed a fine powerful voice, and a highly cultivated style of singing. He was much applauded. Signor D'Angeli (whose figure is tall and commanding), as Douglas of Angus, was favourably received; but that is all which can

be said of him. James the Fifth of Scotland was performed by Curioni, who (from labouring under a severe cold) in the *romance* sung behind the scenes, and in 'Aurora sorgerai,' in the last scene, was hoarse and dissonant. At the end of the opera 'God save the King' was sung by the whole company, and the audience stood up and joined in the chorus. The whole of the new performers were then called for. They appeared again on the stage, and received, *en masse*, that distinguishing applause which hitherto had only been bestowed on singers of first-rate ability. This foreign custom, which had that night reached its *acme* of absurdity, would be "more honoured in the breach than the observance." Without referring to the recent difference between the manager of the King's Theatre and parts of his orchestra, it must have struck every one capable of judging, that the band of the Italian opera was vastly inferior to what it had been: it had indeed been declining for several seasons. This has proceeded, no doubt, from the salaries of the instrumental performers having been so much reduced, that musicians of superior talent would not remain in the orchestra: so that their situations have been filled up by persons of such inferior capacities as to make it difficult to determine which deserves most censure, the manager for parting with a

phalanx of talent, or those who had the temerity to succeed them ! The same saving system has been acted on for several years past in our national theatres, where, provided the requisite number was had, talent was considered of slight importance. This is not calculated to excite surprise, when certain actors become managers, as their jealousy of musicians is proverbial. Many years ago, when the elder Cramer, the admirable violin player, was in his zenith, and was playing a concerto in the theatre at Liverpool during one of the grand musical festivals, the great Stephen Kemble, who acted Falstaff without stuffing, and was not remarkable for any thing but his bulk, coming behind the scenes in the midst of it, and hearing the immense peals of applause Cramer's performance elicited, opening the stage-door, and viewing him, he said, with a vacant stare to those about him,—“What can all this mean ?” And, during the management of John Kemble at Covent Garden Theatre, on the popular ballet of ‘Oscar and Malvina’ being revived, and Weippert, the excellent harp player, requiring for his occasional performance on the stage in that piece what he had before received (one guinea per night), Kemble (who had himself only *seventy-five pounds* a week !) exclaimed with astonishment—“What ! does the man want an estate ?” These occurrences ought

not to appear extraordinary, when it is considered that during the early part of their career they were perhaps accustomed to see only one miserable drunken fidler in the orchestras of the provincial theatres they were attached to, whose excesses probably occasioned their immaculacy to imbibe an unconquerable aversion to the whole musical race! Speaking of actors generally, I feel no hesitation to declare, that I believe there are as liberal and as respectable persons in their profession as are to be found in any other.—To return to the opera. Rossini's opera 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia' was performed on Tuesday the 21st of April, for the purpose of introducing Madame Malibran Garcia, for the first time after four years' absence, in the character of Rosina. The improvement of this lady was great, both as an actress and a singer, and she went through the part with great animation and effect. In the cavatina, 'Una voce puoco fa,' she displayed great brilliancy, taste, and novelty, and in the duet with Zuchelli, 'Dunque io sono,' she received loud and reiterated applause. In the music lesson scene, however, Madame Malibran Garcia did not evince good taste, by the introduction of a French air of no particular merit, which, in comparison with Rossini's charming music, appeared like a patch of frieze on a gold tissue.

With this exception, she performed the part to the entire satisfaction of an elegant and crowded audience. Signor Zucchelli was the Figaro ; but his translation from the serious to the comic opera was not calculated to set him off to advantage. A Signor Graziani made his first appearance in this country as Doctor Bartolo, and was more successful than most of his predecessors in the part of the superannuated *inamorato*. On Tuesday the 5th of May Mademoiselle Sontag made her first appearance this season, as Angelina, in Rossini's opera 'La Cenerentola.' The reception she met with from a crowded audience was flattering in the extreme, and her exertions throughout the opera were vehemently applauded. Her bravura, which ends the last act, was vehemently encored ; but she did not comply with the wishes of the audience, considering perhaps (from the indiscriminate manner in which the applause had been lately bestowed) that now "The post of honour is a private station." The audience, however, called for her after the curtain fell, and on her reappearance on the stage she received strong testimonies of the sense they entertained of her admirable talents. Signor Donzelli performed the part of Ramiro. His duet with Mademoiselle Sontag, 'Una gracia, un certo incento,' was a highly finished performance ; and the quartet be-

tween Sontag, Donzelli, Zuchelli, and Le Vasseur, called forth a general encore.

On the 26th of January, 1829, died at his house in Berner's Street, after a protracted illness, William Shield, Esq., the justly celebrated musical composer, aged 82 years. Mr. Shield first came to London in the year 1776, and took a seat in the orchestra of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, as a performer on the tenor, by the invitation of Giardini, who had met him at Scarborough, where he then led the band, and composed for a provincial theatre. He began his career as a composer in London, by setting the admired musical two-act piece called 'The Flitch of Bacon,' for Colman's theatre in the Haymarket, in the year 1778, which was very successful ; and in 1782 he was engaged as composer and director of the music at Covent Garden Theatre. His first opera at the latter was 'Rosina,' the music of which, from the beauty of the melodies, and their elegant and effective accompaniments, confirmed the favourable opinion the public had formed of his talents by his first production. He subsequently composed many successful operas for the same theatre, amongst the most prominent of which are :—

Robin Hood,	1784
Fontainebleau,	1784

The Woodman,	1791
Travellers in Switzerland,	1794
Italian Villagers,	1797
Wicklow Gold Mines,	1797;

and many others, besides a great number of popular musical pieces in two acts, pantomimes, &c. &c. At the end of the theatrical season of 1797, owing to a difference between him and Mr. Harris, the proprietor, he withdrew from Covent Garden Theatre, and travelled to Rome, in company with his old friend Mr. Ritson.

Mr. Ritson, author of an excellent collection of ancient ballads, was a very singular character. He had studied the law, but did not practise it. He had adopted the notions of Pythagoras, and believed in the transmigration of souls ; consequently he would not eat of any thing which had possessed life, lest he should be partaking of his dearest relative. I supped with him and Mr. Shield one night at a coffee-house, when he would not taste of any thing but an egg. So firmly did he adhere to the system, that on beginning to recover from a fever, and the physician prescribed as his first nourishment a little broth, in which a chicken had been boiled, he declared that he would rather die than violate the principle he had so long cherished !

On Mr. Shield's return to England in 1792, Mr. Harris, to my knowledge, made frequent applications to him to compose an opera for his theatre, (Covent Garden,) with which he did not comply till the year 1807, when he composed some of the most beautiful music that ever came from his pen, to the opera called 'Two Faces under a Hood ;' and in the year 1817 he was induced to put music to an afterpiece in two acts, for the same theatre, which was his last. Mr. Shield published, by subscription, a highly useful treatise, called 'An Introduction to Harmony,' for which I had the pleasure to present to him the names of one hundred subscribers. This work, by simplifying the system, is calculated to facilitate the study of the science. He afterwards gave to the public a second part of the same work, which was on a more extended scale. Mr. Shield did not accept any public engagement after his return from the continent, and devoted himself to study and the society of his friends, amongst whom few enjoyed more of his society and friendship than Incledon, the popular singer, and myself. Mr. Shield possessed a strong mind, an even temper, and great liberality of disposition, through which estimable qualities he gained the esteem of all who knew him. Indeed every one spoke well of him, although he had not "bowed as low to knaves and

fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue." As every man has his hobby-horse, and has a right to mount it whenever he pleases, provided he does not splash others on the road, so had he his, which was a passion for being considered a good shot; so that whenever he went to pass a few days with a friend in the country, his gun was his constant companion, although his love of study perhaps prevented his using it. Being on a visit to his old and intimate friend, the Rev. H. Bate Dudley, at Bradwell in Essex, when the shooting season commenced, Mr. Dudley and another friend, who were early risers, proceeded on the morning of the 1st of September to shoot some partridges for dinner. Shield, who had declined being of that sun-rise excursion, took his gun after breakfast and went alone in quest of game, and returning within an hour, triumphantly presented to Mrs. Dudley a brace of fine birds. Mr. Dudley and his friend, two of the best shots in the county, after a tiresome chase of five hours, returning without any, owing to the birds being few and shy, Mrs. Dudley, in a good-humoured and bantering manner, said to her husband,—“O, never mind, my dear, I have got a brace notwithstanding!”—“You have got a brace?” said he, with surprise, “Where did you get a brace?”—“O,” said she, “Mr. Shield, who was only out

an hour, brought them to me."—"Indeed!" said he; "pray let me see them." The partridges were accordingly brought, and no shot marks appearing on them, Mr. Dudley, unable to suppress a laugh, exclaimed, "These birds were killed with silver shot!" On the death of Sir William Parsons, in the year 1817, Mr. Shield was appointed Master of the King's Band and composer of the odes, by the Prince Regent (his late Majesty George the Fourth); but circumstances have prevented any odes being performed at court since his appointment. Mr. Shield having for a length of time suffered under a pulmonary complaint, found it necessary to sleep in the air, a short distance from London, from whence he occasionally returned to his house in Berner's Street. One of the letters I received from him will show the state of his health at the time it was written.

" Dear Parke,

" Having been recently both cupped and blistered, I can neither eat, sleep, or write with comfort; but that you have given a stimulus to the latter exertion, the inclosure of this envelope will prove.

" My dear Parke,

" Yours faithfully,

" Sept. 14, 1828.

" Wm. SHIELD.

" W. T. Parke, Esq.

“ Intense study, which made me a stranger to bodily exercise, has proved the painful cause of my long indisposition; and the advice of my medical monitor is, to give my mind rest, and my limbs motion, until they both attain their wonted vigour.”

Mr. Shield was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

A short time after the British parliament had passed the Catholic emancipation bill, in the year 1829, I dined with a party of gentlemen at the house of a musical friend, where that subject was discussed with a degree of moderation and ability which seldom attaches to one of a political nature. Mr. D—e, the well-known liberal and sensible professor, who had previously and ably advocated the cause of the Catholics, being requested to give a toast, arose, and in spontaneous technicals gave the following: “ May Catholic and Protestant be firmly united in friendship’s *common chord*!—may they think and act in *unison*!—may their *discords resolve* into pure *harmony*! and may they avoid *contrary motion*, to the end of *Time*!”

On Saturday the 2nd of May, Handel’s divine oratorio, ‘The Messiah,’ was performed in Guildhall, for the benefit of the distressed weavers of

Spitalfields and Bethnal Green, in the presence of a very numerous and genteel audience. At the head of the vocal performers were, Miss Paton, Miss Wilkinson, Mr. Braham, Mr. Phillips, &c.; and of the instrumental, Messrs. F. Cramer, (leader,) Linley, Dragonetti, Nicholson, Wilman, &c. Between the first and second parts of the oratorio Mademoiselle Sontag, who had just arrived in England, sang Guiglielmi's air, 'Gratias agimus,' (admirably accompanied on the clarionet by Mr. Wilman,) in which she astonished and delighted all present. It was encored. It is gratifying to observe, that the exertions of the whole of the performers on this occasion were gratuitously conferred; for charity as well as mercy "is doubly blessed: it blesses him who gives and him who takes."

Music was this season in a flourishing state, towards which the excellence of the singers engaged for the King's Theatre greatly contributed. The concert of Ancient Music and the Philharmonic concert opened at their usual periods at the Hanover Square and Argyll Rooms; and on Wednesday the 7th of May the first of a series of new ones given by the proprietor, commenced in the room of the King's Theatre, now styled the King's Concert Room, which having recently undergone a variety of repairs and decorations, and being

fitted up with boxes, &c., had assumed the appearance of an elegant little theatre. The principal vocal performances were admirably sustained by Mademoiselle Sontag, Madame Pisaroni, and Madame Malibran Garcia; Signori Zuchelli, Curioni, Donzelli, Bordogni, Le Vasseur, and Graziani, forming a phalanx of talent which could not but prove irresistible. A duet by Madame Pisaroni and Mademoiselle Sontag, from 'Semiramide,' afforded one of the happiest specimens of vocal perfection ever witnessed. Monsieur Rousselot, first violoncello at the King's Theatre, played a pot-pourri on that instrument, in which he displayed a good deal of talent. Mr. Schmidt performed some variations on 'Di tanti palpiti' on the trombone, by which he excited more surprise than he gave delight; for although he has by labour and perseverance achieved much, the tones of the trombone resembling more the music of the spears than the spheres, are better adapted to a military band than a concert-room. The first of four concerts (in the morning) was presented at the Argyll Rooms, on Monday the 11th of May, in which Mademoiselle Sontag, Mademoiselle Blasis, and Mademoiselle Nina Sontag took the lead, the latter for the first time in public. Her age appears to be fifteen or sixteen, and her person and voice bear a strong resemblance to her

sister Mademoiselle Sontag ; but her powers of execution are infinitely inferior ; which is not surprising, as at her age they cannot probably be yet wholly developed. The letter-scene, however, in the marriage of Figaro, sung by the two sisters, was greatly applauded and encored. A concerto by Mayseder was performed on the violin by Monsieur Artot, a youth of about thirteen years of age. These premature instances of musical ability, like the early productions of the seasons, are highly prized, while their novelty and rarity counterbalance their want of maturity. Monsieur Artot displayed a fine *coup d'archet*, and great powers of execution. This young gentleman is a pupil of the Conservatoire in Paris.

On Monday the 8th of June the King had an evening party and concert at his Palace in St. James's, to which the members of the royal family, the principal ambassadors and ministers, and a great number of the nobility and gentry were invited. The vocalists were, Mademoiselle Sontag and Nina Sontag, Mesdames Camporese, Pisaroni, and Malibran; Signori Curioni, Zuchelli, Donzelli, and De Begnis. Amongst the instrumental performers were Messrs. Linley, Dragonetti, Puzzi, Cramer, and Atwood. The concert concluded before one o'clock. The suit of apartments were thrown open on the occasion, and

presented a scene of great magnificence and brilliancy.

Music must be very flat on the continent when such singers as Velluti and Madame Camporese come to England merely on the speculation of singing at concerts. The latter had a public benefit-concert at the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury's, in Arlington Street, on Friday the 12th of June, at one guinea a ticket!

On Saturday the 2nd of May a new opera, called 'Masaniello, or the Dumb Girl of Portici,' was produced at Drury Lane Theatre. This piece, the success of which was complete, is taken from 'La Muette de Portici;' the music of it, which is composed by M. Auber, is characteristic and beautiful. Mr. Braham and Miss Betts were particularly happy in the airs allotted to them; and Mr. T. Cooke, the leader of the band at that theatre, sang and acted his part, Don Alphonso, in the opera very respectably. Though it appears curious for a leader of the band to ascend from the orchestra and act on the stage, it is not more so than the following *vice versa* instance of locomotion: Cubit, an actor belonging to Covent Garden Theatre some years ago, who was a tolerable violinist, during one of his summer trips, played Hamlet in a provincial theatre; and musicians being scarce there, he actually descended

into the orchestra, in the dress of the royal Dane, and played the fiddle between the acts! At Covent Garden Theatre a part of Weber's celebrated opera, *Der Freyschutz*, was represented on Wednesday the 3rd of June by German singers and in German words, to German music. The performers were, M. Rosner, first tenor to the Duke of Brunswick, in the part of Mar (Adolf); M. Schutz, in the character of Casper; Mademoiselle Schweitzer, principal soprano to the Duke of Hesse Cassel, as Agatha; and Madame Rosner, as Anchan, the soubrette, companion of Agatha. They introduced some of the original music of the opera, not till then performed in England, particularly a scena by Casper, which was admirably given by M. Schutz. These performers collectively displayed much ability. It is not, however, surprising that they were attended by a thin audience, as an opera in that anti-dulcet language, the German, is, with the exception of the music, as little calculated to delight our English citizens as a curtain lecture or a feast postponed.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on Monday the 1st of June with a variety of entertainments. The principal novelty of the evening was the performance in the Saloon of Rossini's comic opera 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia,' in which the chief parts were sustained by Signori Torri,

Pellegrini, De Angioli, Madame de Angioli, Miss Fanny Ayton, and Madame Castelli. These performers, who are well known to the public, displayed their usual abilities: it is not, however, likely that this refined species of entertainment will become popular with that part of the public who now visit Vauxhall. The gardens presented great diversity of polite amusements, from the smoking-room, to the Italian opera!

At the English Opera House a new and interesting melo-drame was produced on the 2nd of July, intitled, ‘The Sister of Charity.’ It is a translation from a foreign drama, and is a mixture of the serious and pathetic, occasionally relieved by scenes of a comic character. The ‘Sister of Charity’ is in itself clever and entertaining, and being aided by the admirable acting of Miss Kelly and Mr. Keely, will no doubt prove highly attractive. The piece was received with great applause, and experienced a long run.

At the same theatre a new opera, composed by Ferdinand Ries, called ‘The Robber’s Bride,’ was produced on the 15th of July. It is a translation of the German drama ‘Die Rauber Brant,’ which is popular on the continent. The music of this opera is rich in concerted pieces and choruses: it was loudly applauded. It was most effectively

got up, and must afford high gratification to every lover of music. It was adapted by Mr. Hawes, and is creditable to the talent of that gentleman. Mr. H. Phillips, as the Count, did ample justice to the difficult music of the character, and gave his last air with great feeling and expression. Mr. Sapiro exerted himself very successfully, and Miss Betts, in her *scena* 'Ere distraction,' was highly impressive. A glee by the banditti was encored. The proprietor of this theatre is entitled to the thanks of the musical world for this as well as his former productions. It must not be forgotten that Mr. Arnold was the first who gave to the English public Weber's popular opera, 'Der Freyschutz.' The King's Theatre closed on the 1st of August with Cimarosa's opera, 'Gli Orazi e Curiazi.' The two winter theatres opened as usual for the season in the early part of October.

A new drama, called 'Shakspeare's Early Days' was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 30th of October. The agreeable and varied overture to this piece, by Mr. Bishop, was loudly and deservedly applauded, as well as the music in the fairy scene, composed and compiled by Mr. Stansbury. The piece was tolerably well received.

At the same theatre a new opera called 'The Night Before the Wedding, and the Wedding Night,' was performed on the 17th of November.

This piece is taken from a French opera, intitled *Les Deux Nuits*. The music is for the greatest part by *Boieldieu*, and the management of it has been ably performed by Mr. Bishop. The opera abounds with ingenious choruses and concerted pieces. Mr. Wood sang his part with great effect, and Miss Hughes gave hers admirably. It was on the whole favourably received.

Under the immediate patronage of his Majesty, the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music performed at the King's Theatre on the 12th of December Mozart's Italian comic opera in two acts, intitled 'Cosi Fan' Tutti,' the principal characters by Miss Childe, Miss Tucker, and Miss Bromley, Mr. Brizzi, Mr. F. Smith, and Mr. E. Seguin. The band, with two or three exceptions, was composed of the pupils, under the direction of Mr. C. Potter, and was led by Mr. C. A. Seymour. This opera yields in rank to none of those works of the great composer which continue to bid defiance to the capricious changes in musical taste. A great deal of applause was bestowed on the splendid effusions of Mozart's genius, and on the correct and effective manner in which they were given by the singers, &c.

During the latter part of this year, 1829, prodigies were the order of the day. The ennui which existed during the autumnal absence of the

noblesse from the capital was partly removed by the extraordinary public exhibitions which had taken place, and the middle classes of society were all gratified with the sight of the Fire King, *alias* the fire-eater, at the Argyll Rooms ; the Siamese youths at the Egyptian Hall, and the elephant at the Adelphi Theatre. The first, the fire-eater, had excited the admiration of the public for a length of time previous to the arrival of the two latter. This *calid* gentleman, it is said, from his long habit of living on fire, feels that raging heat internally as can only be subdued by occasional draughts of vitriol and prussic acid. His fire, however, being nearly out, was without much difficulty extinguished by the arrival of the second, the two Siamese youths, who, united by a band incarnate, engrossed the attention not only of open-mouthed curiosity, but of science also. This *lusus naturæ* was as much run after in London as the late child with two heads was in Paris. Nevertheless it has not yet been determined which should be considered the greatest curiosity, the former or the latter : the public so far differing in opinion, that the virtuosi decided in favour of the two bodies, while the literati gave the preference to the two heads. That all the rational beings both in England and France should agree with the literati, is not surprising, extraordinary heads

being extremely scarce in both countries ! The last of these wonderful productions, the elephant, who, as well as the youths, came from Siam, may be said to be a powerful prop to the Adelphi Theatre ; and is still so popular (in 1830) that, unlike theatrical stars in general, she needs no newspaper puffing ; the public, through an eager haste, puffing every evening from afar to witness her prodigious faculties. Amongst the surprising tricks she displays is that of drawing the corks of two bottles of wine, and drinking the whole of the contents thereof ; a *quantum* I should be inclined to consider more than *sufficit*, did I not know that theatrical performers on the stage (whatever they do when off it) take their wine, as the Irishman says, strongly diluted with water, particularly when the manager provides it. This Siamese lady has not, I presume, tasted ardent spirits ; and from her not being permitted to go at large, she has not, like many other ladies, yet found her way to the gin shop, whose contents, of which she perhaps would swallow a pailful, would destroy the coats, ay, and the waistcoats too, of her delicate stomach, to the admiration of those noted purveyors of liquid fire, Messrs. Thompson and Fearon, and their sleeping partners. This elephant, notwithstanding the length of time she has performed at the Adelphi Theatre, still draws

like a blister, to the no small relief of Messrs. Matthews and Yates, the proprietors of it, who, when she fails, and all things must fail, will find it a difficult task to procure another performer equally great to fill up the vast chasm she will thereby occasion.

M. Chabert, the Fire King, alias the fire-eater, who had for a considerable time been displaying his skill, by swallowing large draughts of prussic acid, &c. has afforded that degree of gratification to his auditors, as accords with the poet, who says,

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
In being cheated as to cheat :
As lookers on feel most delight
Who least perceive the juggler's sleight.

This exhibitant, who had challenged any gentleman to bring his own prussic acid, which he would take in his presence, experienced a very awkward reception at the Argyll Rooms (his place of exhibiting) on the morning of his benefit, the 4th of February, 1830. On that occasion he had a vast influx of company, owing perhaps to the following curious circumstance : It having been doubted by some men of science that he really swallowed prussic acid, and that his boasted

antidote possessed the power of rendering its effect nugatory, Mr. Wakley, the editor of the 'Medical Gazette,' and a distinguished member of the healing art, determined to put him to the test. He therefore procured some prussic acid of a genuine sort (full proof) to administer to this human salamander. Mr. Wakley, however, knowing the power of the sample in his possession, prudently proceeded two days before M. Chabert's announced benefit to the magistrates at Bow Street, Covent Garden, to ask their opinion as to his (Mr. Wakley's) liability, should the Fire King have the temerity to swallow it, and his antidote should fail. The reply was, of course, that he would be accessory to the man's death. Mr. Wakley, however, having determined to push the Fire King to the utmost lengths, attended with his acid; in doing which he did not take him by surprise, as the application of the former at Bow Street Police-office on the preceding day appeared in all the London newspapers. M. Chabert, on being publicly asked by Mr. Wakley if he would swallow the prussic acid he then held in his hand, declined it; but, swallowing his own words, observed, that he had only asserted on a previous day that he would administer that deadly poison to his two dogs, one of whom should die, and the other be saved by taking his antidote.

The truth appears to be, that Monsieur Chabert preferred the acid prepared by himself to any other. In consequence of this evasion, the Frenchman was, after a good deal of skirmishing, forcibly ejected from the room by the incensed audience, who imagined that he had received a *quietus*, which would deter him from again appearing before the public. M. Chabert, however, whose fire was not quite extinguished by this misadventure, shortly afterwards exhibited again in St. James's Street, (the Argyll Rooms having in the interim been burnt to the ground,) by making his two dogs (instead of himself) take prussic acid, one of whom was to have died, and the other to have recovered, according to his prediction. In this however he failed ; but whether it proceeded from his dogs not being perfect, I cannot say.

If instances were wanting to prove that dogs may be made good actors, the following one will doubtless convince even the most fastidious : About five-and-forty years ago, Signor Castelli, who had lately arrived in England, was engaged, together with his company of dogs, at Sadler's Wells Theatre. These animals did many surprising things ; but that which excited the greatest admiration was their acting the last scene in the popular dramatic piece called 'The Deserter.' The dogs marched on the stage, in French mili-

tary costume, with their arms and accoutrements, guarding the deserter to the place of execution ; and, when they had taken their respective stations, on the word being given, one of them fired, and shot him. The deserter-dog, (the Garrick of the canine company,) after he had fallen, writhed about in convulsive agonies till apparently relieved by death, when he lay as still as a defunct mouse ; and so perfect was his performance to the end, that though he was held up by the tail for the audience to view him, he never moved a limb, till his master had gently thrown him off the stage, (at one of the side scenes,) when he got up, and wagging his tail, ran into the green-room for his reward,—a good supper !

I do not mean to apply this degree of intelligence to the dogs of M. Chabert, although they might have possessed equal capabilities ; but that the statement is correct numbers of persons now living can vouch for, having witnessed the performance. Of fire-eaters, we have had in England many, but none I believe (people having been satisfied with the common food) prior to the reign of Charles the Second, when the man who then exhibited was much followed. He devoured, to the admiration of the public, burning candles, links, and other such *light* food, and afterwards washed them down with draughts of vitriol ! He also, according to a

writer of veracity of that time, lighted a coal fire upon his tongue, and on it roasted an oyster, which he subsequently ate! so much to the delight of the spectators, that the feat would probably have been encored, had it not been for the prevailing *morality* and *frugality* of the people of that reign, who were desirous to avoid putting the exhibitor to an additional expense for fuel. Since that period fire-eaters have been so abundant, that every country fair has boasted of one. Of late, a new class has sprung up, called fire-drinkers, whose new displays, like many of our new inventions, are only those of the ancients brought to maturity. This class, who swallow that liquid fire, yclept gin, in surprising quantities, is composed of both sexes; but it is generally considered that the greatest feats are performed by the females. They had, however, in their demoralising system, arrived at such an alarming height in the present year, 1830, that the king's ministers, who are at all times very *reluctant* to inflict taxation, considered it necessary to interfere; and in order to check the practice, were induced to lay an additional impost on the article of their consumption. The levying this tax on liquid fire is considered by many to be impolitic; because, as it is generally acknowledged that England is burdened with an over-population, and that the vent of emigration

is therefore necessary, it would have been cheaper to have suffered these liquid *fireists* to transport themselves beyond the river Styx, than for the government, perhaps, to encounter a heavy expense by conveying them to the Swan River.

1830.

At Covent Garden Theatre a new musical adaptation of the hacknied subject, 'The Maid and the Magpie,' was produced on the 4th of February under the title of 'Ninetta, or the Maid of Palaisseau.' In this piece there is no novelty but the name.

The music is entirely taken from Rossini's popular opera, 'La Gazza Ladra,' even to the overture. Miss Paton performed the character of 'Ninetta.' The English version of the celebrated cavatina, 'Di piacer mi balza il cor,' was sung by her with all that sweetness and brilliancy for which she is so eminently distinguished; and she sustained the whole vocal part with equal ability. She also acted the part with great truth and nature. Mr. Wood appeared as Adolphe, (Gianetto,) and sang the beautiful air, 'Ma quel piacer,' in a very finished style. The opera was received by a crowded audience with most unqualified approbation. On the same evening, under the immediate patronage of his Majesty, the pupils

of the Royal Academy of Music performed, for the last time, at the King's Theatre, Cimarosa's comic opera, ' *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, ' in a very improved style.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 6th of February, with Rossini's opera *seria*, intitled ' *Semiramide*. ' The principal characters by Mademoiselle Blasis, Madame Petralia (from the Teatro Tordinona, Rome, her first appearance in this country), Signori Curioni, Donzelli, D'Angeli, Deville, and Signor Santini, (from the Italian theatre in Paris,) his first appearance in England. Mademoiselle Blasis displayed a voice of fine quality, and a style of singing in which the utmost taste and expression were happily combined. She was throughout the part loudly applauded. The voice of Madame Petralia is a contr'alto, which, without being powerful or melodious, has been rendered agreeable by the aid of art, which enables her to execute her airs, &c. correctly. She gave the first air, ' Oh ! come daquel di,' in a manner that reminded us of the voice and style of Velluti. She met upon the whole with a favourable reception. Signor Santini also made his first appearance in the part of Assur. His voice is a deep and sonorous bass, which he manages with great facility, and he is an experienced actor as well as singer. Curioni, as

Idrone, met with that cordial reception which ever attends old and established favourites. He sang, as usual, with great taste and judgment. After the opera the national anthem, 'God save the King,' was sung by the whole of the singers, Mademoiselle Blasis and Signor Curioni giving the solo parts. The concert of Ancient Music, and the Philharmonic concert opened as usual, at the Hanover Square and the Argyll Rooms. They both displayed the same high degree of musical talent, were as numerously attended, and as generally and justly applauded as ever. Miss Paton, as a singer, took the lead at both these fashionable concerts.

The oratorios, under the direction of Mr. Hawes, were performed during the Lent season at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres alternately, and were well attended.

On Saturday the 20th of February was performed at the King's Theatre, for the first time this season, 'La Cenerentola,' (Cinderella,) one of the most spirited of Rossini's operas. The Cenerentola of Mademoiselle Blasis is by no means equal to several of her other characters; yet it is impossible not to receive great pleasure from her performance of it. Donzelli, in the part of Don Ramiro, displayed to great advantage the finest tenor voice perhaps in Europe. A Signor Am-

brogi, from the theatre of San Carlos at Naples, made his first appearance in *Don Magnifico*. His voice is a baritone of no great compass or flexibility. He succeeded most in the comic duet, ‘*Un segreto d’importanza*.’ His pretensions, however, are of a moderate kind. The theatre was full and fashionably attended, and the opera went off with great applause.

Rossini’s ‘*Cenerentola*’ was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre on the 13th of April, under the title of ‘*Cinderella, or, the Fairy Queen and the little glass slipper*.’ It has been adapted by Mr. Lacy, who has made copious additions from other works of the great composer, Rossini. Miss Paton appeared as Cinderella. She played the part with a great deal of natural simplicity, and sang with exquisite taste. Mr. Wood in the duet with Miss Paton, sustained his part of it in a very effective manner. It was universally applauded, and would have been repeated had not envy, affecting a humane feeling in order to get rid of it, cried out—“*Oh no, it is too much* ;” whereby the musical part of the audience, as well as the singers, experienced some disappointment. Miss Hughes exerted her vocal powers with good effect.

The praiseworthy example of Mr. Arnold, in bringing out at his theatre the music of popular

continental composers, having at length stimulated the managers of the two winter theatres to pursue a similar course, a new and splendid opera by Rossini, intitled 'Hofer, the Tell of the Tyrol,' was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 2nd of May. The music, which is taken from Rossini's opera of 'Guillaume Tell,' was selected and adapted with great ability to the English stage by Mr. Bishop. Miss Stephens sang with her usual delicacy and sweetness. Her first air, 'To her mother's heart she hath pressed him,' is very beautiful, and was given with grace and expression. Mr. H. Phillips, by his admirable execution of the difficult music of his part, has added much to his well-earned reputation, and Sinclair appeared to more advantage than usual. The whole of the music of this opera partakes of the deep science of the German school. There are but few airs, but it abounds in skilfully arranged concerted pieces, and in powerfully effective choruses. The whole of the music is admirable, and it cannot be over-praised. This opera was eminently successful.

At the King's Theatre the serious opera 'Semiramide' was performed on the 22nd of May, with a different cast of parts from the previous representation of it. Madame Lalande sustained the character of the Assyrian Queen, Madame

Malibran that of Arsace, and Signor Lablache that of Assur. Madame Lalande's performance was highly commendable, but was deficient in that vocal energy which was requisite on the occasion. Madame Malibran's Arsace was equal to any of her best performances. Her duet with Madame Lalande in the second act, 'Giorno d' orrore,' was a fine specimen of the vocal powers of both ladies. Signor Lablache's Assur was as perfect as could be expected.

The following article has very recently appeared in a London paper, from which it has been copied into several others :

"We were invited to witness, on Friday the 4th of June, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, a private display of the performance of a musical wonder, Michael Boai, who recently arrived in London from the continent, after having appeared before many sovereigns, &c. This performer is a native of Mayence, and he has, by dint of labour and dexterity, attained a degree of perfection in an art scarcely worth his pains; that of producing by the mechanical movement of his mouth and hands, something in the nature of what is familiarly called chin-chopping, a sound very similar to that of castanets, but partaking more of tone. The volume of the sound is not very remarkable; but the execution upon it is wonderful, and the musical

skill displayed is considerable. M. Boai came forward attended by a lady, his wife, with a guitar, and a gentleman with a violin. Boai himself also carried a guitar. The performance commenced with a pretty air on the three instruments, at the end of which M. Boai having laid aside his guitar, and wetted his mouth and fingers, accompanied the two other instruments on his mouth-hand-organ, as we must call it till we are favoured with the professor's own word for it, in the manner already described, producing a forte and piano, executing the most rapid and difficult passages of some foreign air with singular facility and precision, running up and down his scale, and marking even half notes with distinctness: but the peculiar movements of the performers head and hands threw an air of the ludicrous over the exhibition, which rendered it amusing as well as curious. When this piece was finished the lady sang agreeably to the guitar and violin, while her husband recovered his breath for another display; and in this order the performance continued till its close. The audience, comprising some distinguished professional musicians, applauded cordially."

This curious display of M. Boai is not new in this country; for I remember, upwards of forty years ago, a popular chin-chopper named Buck-

horse, who was doubtless the inventor of this elegant and ingenious style of performance. Buckhorse, by the same application of his clenched fists to his chin, and the action of his mouth, played various popular airs with considerable tone, taste, and expression. He had not perhaps equally with the before-mentioned professor studied the chromatic scale, nor any other scale save those of the butcher and chandler, nor had he such rapid and articulate execution. He did not aim at exciting surprise, and never overstepped “the modesty of nature;” and there may probably be discovered that comparative difference of genius between him and M. Boai, as may be found between the pure and captivating melodies of Shield, and the deep and learned science of Beethoven. Buckhorse moved in a humble sphere of life, and soared not to the honour of exhibiting in the presence of royalty; and being a peripatetic artist, was in the habit of peregrinating by night, in the purlieus of Covent Garden, from one coffee-house to another to give his performance, for which he was rewarded with silver simultaneously bestowed by the gentlemen present. Buckhorse was as negligent of his dress as he had been of his education, and possessed a countenance so truly forbidding, that when a remark-

ably ill-favoured person appeared, it was proverbially said, “That man is as ugly as Buck-horse!”

Having been an appendage of the two great London Theatres for fifty years, and as theatricals so generally engross the attention of the public, I will briefly describe the state in which the Metropolitan theatres and those in its immediate vicinity were in the year 1829. As the impulse given to those undertakings depends chiefly on the complexion of the times, and as trade, agriculture, &c. have for a considerable time been in a very languid state, theatricals of all sorts, good, bad, and indifferent, have felt the force of the general depression. The oldest of the great London Theatres, Drury Lane, has claimed precedence time out of mind. The present lessee, Mr. Price, has, I believe, payed due attention to merit and to the public; and yet, owing to the enormous rent, and the ridiculously high salaries of many of the actors, he might perhaps have found himself minus, had not the committee of trustees set a laudable example to the landholders, by returning him two thousand pounds of the last year’s rent. Mr. Price, however, though the theatrical season of 1829 commenced under his management, abandoned it in the early part of 1830, when it devolved on the committee, who

were anxious to dispose of it again to the best bidder. Of the rival Theatre Covent Garden, to which Rich the manager removed from that of Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the year 1733, it is only necessary to say that Mr. C. Kemble, Captain Forbes, R. N., and Mr. Willet, the present lessees, who removed the load from the shoulders of Mr. Harris for ten years, eight of which have expired, have been reduced to the miserable expedient of calling public meetings of their creditors to claim their indulgence for time to pay; and even publicly solicit charitable aid, through which only they were enabled to commence the season of 1829! Whether this failure is to be attributed to bad management or to extravagance, I cannot determine; but it is well known that some of the profession are inclined to the latter. About thirty years ago, soon after the custom crept in of persons letting out on hire table services of china, glass, &c., an admired actress, who had no bad opinion of herself, desired her purveyor of those brittle commodities to send her, among other things, a cut-glass dish, to contain that piece of confectionary called a trifle. The purveyor waited on her with one brilliantly cut, and of an elegant form; but the lady found that it was not sufficiently handsome or fashionable for her friends. Being a little piqued at her objections, he said :

“ I am sorry you do not approve of it: but I can assure you, Madam, that the Duchess of R—d used it a few nights back, and was thoroughly satisfied with it !”

The Theatre in the Haymarket was first opened three nights in the week by Foote, who having by an accident broken his leg, and being therefore compelled to wear one of cork, an awkward limb for an actor, as it confines him to a particular walk in his profession, he had fortunately interest enough to obtain a grant for a theatre on a long term. Foote, who wrote his own dramas, and acted in them, was so severe a satirist, that he did not spare his best friends or benefactors ; and on the stage he exhibited their peculiarities or defects in as unsparing a manner as did the ancient dramatist, omitting only the masks, which were exact likenesses of the victims of the latter. Foote, who from his style had obtained the appellation of the modern Aristophanes, was witty ; but his wit was of that severe and gross kind which was calculated to make those it was levelled at uncomfortable ; and his want of delicacy was such, that he would rather lose his best friend than his worst joke. Foote being one day at dinner at Earl Kelly’s, at his house at North End, in the early part of the spring, his lordship, who was a *bon vivant*, and

had, as Falstaff says of Bardolph, a very rich face, said to the party during dinner, “I am sorry I cannot give you any cucumbers to-day, for I have none ripe.”—“O,” said Foote, “that must be your own fault, my Lord. Why didn’t you thrust your nose into the hot-house?” On another occasion, Foote calling on the elder Colman, the dramatist, who was recovering from a very severe illness, said, “Well, George, how do you find yourself to-day?”—“Why,” replied Colman, “I mend slowly, because I can’t sleep.”—“Indeed!” said Foote, “then you should take a narcotic, and if that don’t do, read one of your own plays!” Owing to a particular circumstance, Foote found it necessary to leave England, to sojourn for the remainder of his life in France; and, previous to his departure, he transferred the interest he had in the Haymarket Theatre to the elder Colman, for an annuity of 1000*l.* a year. Foote, fortunately for himself as well as Mr. Colman, dying within two or three years afterwards, let the latter into a good thing at a small expense. Mr. Colman, who had previously been joint proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, having engaged a company of excellent performers, opened the theatre six nights in the week, and had the good taste to introduce to a London audience Edwin, a comic singer, who has never

since been equalled, though generally copied; Henderson, Digges, &c. This theatre, in consequence of its dimensions, had hitherto been styled 'The little Theatre in the Haymarket,' till it became a Theatre Royal, in consequence of his late Majesty, George the Third and his Queen, commanding a play there, and honouring it with their presence. On that occasion the curiosity of the public was intense, and the small and inconvenient entrances to the different parts of the house affording by no means accommodation to the immense crowd anxious to gain admittance, the pressure was so great, that seventeen persons were thrown down and trod to death! On the demise of his father, Mr. G. Colman the Younger, to adopt his own appellation, a dramatist whose productions mark genius and cultivation, took possession of the theatre, and continued successfully to direct it till the year 1824, when the grant having expired, and a new one having been obtained, the present Theatre Royal in the Haymarket was erected, and is under the management of Mr. Morris, its proprietor. The magnificent theatre on the opposite side of the Haymarket, called the King's Theatre, in which Italian operas are now performed, was formerly styled the Queen's Theatre, and in it were given both plays and Italian operas till the year 1707, when

the English actors went to Drury Lane Theatre, where, being styled his Majesty's servants, the musicians who performed in the orchestra, and all others not immediately engaged on the stage, on the King visiting it, appeared in uniforms. The English Opera House in the Strand, originally the Lyceum Theatre, was first projected by Dr. Arnold, the celebrated composer and organist to his Majesty George the Third; a gentleman with whom I was well acquainted in the early part of my life, and for whom I entertained the highest respect, on account of his superior talents and the suavity of his manners. This summer theatre, from its admirable company, and the judicious management of its proprietor, Mr. Arnold, son of Dr. Arnold, maintains equal rank with the two great national theatres (as they are by some denominated) Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Of minor theatres we have eight, the lately built Brunswick Theatre, Wellclose Square, having, during the first week it was opened, in 1828, fallen down during a rehearsal, whereby several of the performers, &c. were killed and dreadfully maimed. Sadler's Wells, the most ancient of the minors, was for many years after it first opened famous for tumbling, vaulting on the rope, dancing dogs, &c., and the proprietors of it derived great profit from that species of entertainment. One

curious custom existed there for many years, that of the audience, on paying an additional sixpence, being accommodated with a pint of wine, red or white, or punch. About the year 1778, Sadler's Wells was purchased by the celebrated comedian Tom King, who, while acting at Drury Lane Theatre the character of Bays, the supposed author of the play of 'The Rehearsal,' in which he introduced many observations of his own, said to Bransby, who also acted in it, "That is a strange sort of wig you have got on, Mr. Bransby: it may do well enough to drive a post-chaise in, or to rob the mail, but it is not at all fit for the character you are to perform." Bransby, though taken by surprise, recovering himself, neatly replied, "Why, sir, I thought this a very good wig for the part, particularly as I have lately seen Mr. King, the proprietor of Sadler's Wells, wear just such another."—"Yes, Mr. Bransby," rejoined King, "it may do well enough for the master of a tumbling-shop, but it will never do for my play!"

Astley's Amphitheatre ranks next in point of seniority; but, with the exception of the horse-riding part of the performances, it has not evinced any high degree of perfection. It arose however to what it now is, from a very humble beginning. I remember the elder Astley giving merely eques-

trian performances on the site of the present amphitheatre, obscured from external view, without a roof to cover them, and accompanied only by a drum and fife. At that time and many years after, in order to give cheap publicity to the infant undertaking, the horses and their riders, with the clown at their head, dressed out in their best trappings, paraded in the day-time through the streets of London, attended by fellows blowing post-horns, and distributing bills of the performances to those who would take them. On one of those occasions, while Charles Bannister was stopping in Long Acre to view them, an elderly gentleman near him, with a very large nose, happening to use his pocket handkerchief, and thereby producing an uncommonly loud sound, Bannister, according to his habit of risking any thing for a joke, turning to him, said, “ I’ll thank you, sir, for a bill !”

The Royal Circus, now called The Surrey Theatre, was first opened in the summer of the year 1782. It was built by Colonel West, the ground landlord, and was conducted by Messrs. Charles Dibdin and Hughes. The performances consisted of burlettas composed by Dibdin, and equestrian exercises under the direction of Hughes. The burlettas were performed by juvenile actors only, amongst whom were Miss Wilkinson, Miss

Romanzini, afterwards Mrs. Mountain, and Mrs. Bland. This theatre was so successful during the first season, that at the end of it Dibdin and Hughes shared out of the profits 1500*l.* each. These two worthies at length getting into a squabble, about who should have the largest share, had recourse to law, by which of course they were both ruined: the lawyers got all the money, and the theatre was shut up. It is now called the Surrey Theatre, and is under the direction of Mr. Elliston, the comedian, late lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, who, by his spirit and judgment has brought it to a high state of popularity. This gentleman has lately brought out an operatic piece, founded on Gay's favourite ballad ' Black-eyed Susan,' which experienced such unexampled success, that it was acted one hundred and sixty consecutive nights to crowded audiences. In reference to this unprecedented run, a less fortunate manager of a minor theatre observed in his spleen, "That the public were throwing away their money on an old song!"

The Sans Pareil Theatre, now the Adelphi, was founded upwards of thirty years ago by Mr. Scott, of liquid-blue-dye celebrity, who brought it into such favouritism, that he was enabled subsequently to leave off *dyeing*, and to *live* during the rest of his *life* in pleasing retirement. This

theatre, which has been considerably enlarged, is now, under the title of The Adelphi Theatre, the joint property of Mr. Yates and Mr. Matthews the comedians.

The Tottenham Street Theatre, late the West London, was formerly Pasquali's Concert Room, and afterwards purchased by the noble directors of the concert of Ancient Music, who enlarged and beautified the building, and erected a splendid box for their Majesties George the Third and his Queen, who honoured it with their presence.

This room, about the year 1800, was converted into a small theatre, which was afterwards greatly improved by Mr. Beverly, its late manager.

The Olympic Theatre, in Wych Street, Drury Lane, such as it is, was erected by the elder Astley as a winter theatre, for similar performances to those given by him during the summer at the Amphitheatre on the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge. It was not however honoured with great success, either under his administration or that of his successors. Old Astley used to relate what he thought a whimsical circumstance, which occurred whilst the Olympic Theatre in Wych Street was building. Having a particular occasion to send a letter there to the foreman of the works, from his residence at Lambeth, by his new Irish servant, Astley gave him a letter, say-

ing at the same time, “ You must take that to Wych Street to the foreman.”—“ Yes, sir,” says Paddy, “ to the four men ; but I sha’n’t be able to find it out unless you tell me *which street* it is.”—“ Do you know Drury Lane ?” says Astley.—“ I know every lane in the world,” said Paddy, “ but that same. I know Pudding Lane, and Holborn, and Fleet Street, and Maiden Lane, just by Common Garden, where my countrymen, who, independent lazy min in Ireland, for good wages will condescend to work in England.”—“ Why, then,” said Astley, “ as you know Maiden Lane, go into any of the shops there, and ask them to direct you to Wych Street.” The man set off with the letter ; and when arrived at Maiden Lane, he went into the shop of a baker, whom he asked to tell him “ which street ” his master wanted. The baker laughed, and told him to inquire at the next door ; which having done, he experienced a similar derision. At length, however, Paddy went into the shop of an ironmonger, who, though a dealer in hardware, had a soft and sensitive heart, and who, conceiving that the Irishman must mean Wych Street, Drury Lane, kindly sent one of his men to show him the way. When Paddy arrived at the building, on which a number of men were employed, he called out to them, “ I have got a letter for the four men.” In an

instant he was surrounded by a gang of his countrymen with their hods, &c., who, on his producing the letter, stared, and knew not what to make of it. At length a respectable, tall, jolly sort of a person coming up to them, and reading the address on the note, put an end to their wonder by saying, "That is intended for me, as I am the foreman."—"Faith, sir," says Paddy, "if you had not towld me so yourself, I shou'dn't have believed it; for though you have stuff enough in you for four men, I should have taken you only for one!"

The Coburg Theatre was built and opened by Mr. Jones, the late proprietor of the Royal Circus, and was styled the Coburg Theatre, in compliment to Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, husband of the late lamented Princess Charlotte of Wales, only child of his Majesty George the Fourth. This theatre commenced its career under favourable auspices, and was particularly successful under the subsequent management of Mr. Glossop. But two theatres for similar performances being, as it were, on the same spot, the Surrey Theatre and the Coburg, "like two buckets in a well," sink and rise alternately. The Pavilion Theatre in Whitechapel Road was opened soon after the unfortunate accident had occurred at the Brunswick Theatre, by those per-

formers engaged for the latter, who had been fortunate enough to escape without injury. To the honour of the city of London, a subscription was opened soon after that lamentable catastrophe, by which the surviving performers and other sufferers were relieved, till they were enabled to establish an asylum for themselves, which, by their exertions and ability, has so far thriven as to have caused the present to have obliterated the painful reflections of the past.

The minor theatres, through the arbitrary system of the managers of the larger ones, and the lesser prices of admission, have induced the public to give them the preference, to the great injury (as recent circumstances have proved) of the proud establishments.

In the course of the last forty years there has been a remarkable destruction among the theatres in London and its vicinity by fire. In 1790 the King's Theatre in the Haymarket was consumed, and in the year 1792 the Pantheon in Oxford Street, which had, at a great expense, been converted into a splendid theatre for Italian operas, (under the patronage of his late Majesty George the Third,) in opposition to that which had been rebuilt in the Haymarket, shared the same fate. At these two theatres no lives were lost; but at the fire which subsequently destroyed Astley's

Amphitheatre on the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge, the wife of the elder Astley, the proprietor of it, perished in the flames. The Royal Circus was afterwards consumed by that devouring element; and in the year 1808 the Theatre Royal Covent Garden was burned to the ground, together with many of the surrounding houses. On this last unfortunate occasion a number of persons who had humanely volunteered their assistance at the engines, by the falling of the walls met with a premature death. This calamity was succeeded by the Drury Lane Theatre taking fire also, and being reduced to a heap of ruins in the year 1810; but as this took place on a night when there was not any performance, no personal injury was sustained. The next theatrical conflagrations occurred at the Lyceum Theatre in the Strand, (afterwards the English Opera House,) whilst it was closed in the winter of 1815, attended with great loss to the proprietor and the surrounding neighbourhood. These dire effects of accident or carelessness have, I fear, in some instances proceeded from the too free use during the performances of fireworks, and other combustibles, which persons unconnected with theatres have little idea of. A few days after the fire at Covent Garden Theatre (to which I was then engaged) had taken place, I met a friend, whose

first question was,—“ Were you not greatly surprised at a fire taking place in Covent Garden Theatre ?”—“ No,” I replied ; “ from the nature of the performances I am only surprised that it did not happen sooner !”

The English Opera House was again consumed, by a fire which happened early on the morning of the 16th of last February, after the performance of one of the French plays given in that theatre. How this misfortune occurred has not been ascertained ; but the French actors lost all their dresses, properties, &c. ; while the proprietor of the theatre, not being insured, had the affliction to witness the fruits of his genius, industry, and perseverance, at once swallowed up by the all-devouring element. It is consoling however to know, that Mr. Arnold’s numerous and distinguished friends will enable him again to cater for the public in a new theatre. It has been said by many that it is greatly to be lamented that Mr. Arnold did not insure his theatre. It appears, however, from the nature of the performances of the present day, in which flame and explosion form a prominent feature, the premiums exacted by the insurance offices would be so high as to make it ultimately perhaps useless. As regards these dangerous performances, however, the public are in some measure culpable ; for if they

were to discountenance them, there would be an end to them ; instead of which, fly-like, they buzz about these flaming exhibitions, without considering (like that foolish insect) the danger there is of singeing their wings ! When the new Theatre Royal Covent Garden was rebuilt and opened, in the year 1809, Mr. Harris, the proprietor of it, placed two firemen on his establishment, one of whom watched by day and the other by night ; but what would even their united efforts avail should that calamity again occur ? He should have had recourse to the plan formerly adopted by the British Roscius. One night whilst Garrick was acting, there was a wanton alarm of fire given in the house, in consequence of which great confusion took place. Garrick, who happened to be on the stage at the time, stepping forward, assured the audience that the alarm was a false one ; adding (good-humouredly), “ You need not, ladies and gentlemen, be afraid in this theatre, for I have on the top of it a reservoir of water of such magnitude that, should a fire take place, I could drown you all in an instant ! ”

That once elegant and fashionable place of resort, Vauxhall Gardens, has this season acquired an important acquisition, by the engagement of Mr. Bishop as composer and director of the music. The degradation which the musical de-

partment of this place of amusement has of late suffered has been such, that even with the advantage of Mr. Bishop's superior ability, it may, to restore it to its pristine excellence, prove an *Herculean* labour. He may, notwithstanding, by *inundating* it with the powerful *stream* of his harmony, be enabled to cleanse this *Augean* stable!

George the Fourth, King of England, &c., to the grief of his loyal subjects, departed this life the 26th of June 1830, aged 68 years, at his palace at Windsor, after a severe and protracted illness. He was a beneficent monarch; and, speaking of him in reference to the arts, it may be truly said that rising genius would be inconsolable at his loss, did it not feel assured of experiencing the same benign patronage from his successor, King William the Fourth.

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, soon after his establishment, in the year 1783, began to cultivate music. His favourite instrument was that noble one, the violoncello, on which he was instructed by the greatest master in Europe, John Croisdill, Esq. As the Prince advanced in his musical studies, he became more strongly attached to the pursuit; and so rapid was the progress of his Royal Highness, that at the expiration of a year he played in concert. This habit made him

a good timeist, refined his taste, and imparted to him scientific knowledge. His music parties were of course assisted by professors of superior talent, including Crosdill, Cramer, Schroeter, J. Parke, Salomon, W. T. Parke, Shield, Dance Blake, &c., and occasionally Jarnovicki and Viotti. The Prince had concerts frequently in the morning, which might be considered private parties, there being present perhaps only the Duke of Cumberland (his uncle), the Duke of York (his brother), Colonel Selenger, Mr. Harvey Aston, Mr. Bradyll, and a few other gentlemen whom he honoured with his particular notice. His music parties in the evening were on a more extended scale, as was the band; but they were never calculated to shock the ears of the ladies with the shrill notes of the trumpet, or the infantine cannon of the kettle-drums. They were entirely instrumental, and might without impropriety be termed chamber-music. In the year 1788 the concerts of the Prince of Wales were few, in consequence of his august father being visited with a severe indisposition, which rendered him incapable of continuing to exercise the functions of royalty. At that period party feeling ran high. Mr. Pitt was the premier, and the opposition, headed by Charles James Fox, (denominated the man of the people,) Messrs. Wynd-

ham, Sheridan, and Burke, was very formidable. The latter orator (Burke), whilst announcing the before-mentioned melancholy event in the House of Commons, said, in almost savage eloquence, “The Almighty has hurled the King beneath the lowest peasant in the land!” In the Upper House the communication was made by the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, who (although his countenance was so stern, as it is said to have frightened his own carriage-horses by looking them in the face) delivered an eloquent and feeling speech, which he concluded with the following emphatic expression: —“When I forget my King may God forget me!” The premier, whose abilities were of the most splendid description, had projected the establishment of a Régency. After the preliminaries, however, had been adjusted, and a day fixed for the communication of them to Parliament, a fortunate event occurring, he had the felicity of announcing to that assembly that the recovery of the King made a Regency unnecessary. This information was hailed with enthusiasm from one end of the kingdom to the other. It should here be observed that, during these important and trying proceedings, the conduct of the Prince of Wales was marked by that filial affection, patriotism, and good sense, which claimed the admiration of the whole nation. I have in this solitary instance

entered into a political digression rather foreign to the nature of this work, in order to introduce the following extraordinary proof of the operation of benevolence on a sensible mind which had been betrayed into error: During this great political contest, it appeared that the opposition had the address to gain over to their views the principal and confidential page of the king, Mr. Ramus, who had been for many years a favourite attendant on his Majesty, and towards whom he had been liberal of his favours. That gentleman, however, not being invulnerable, betrayed his trust, by disclosing circumstances which his duty and his gratitude should have taught him to have held sacred. At that period I was professionally patronised by the late Duke of Cumberland, the King's brother; and as his Royal Highness used frequently to send for me when he was alone, to sit and converse with him in his private box at Covent Garden Theatre, I had on one of those occasions an opportunity of seeing Mr. Ramus (the King's page,) who entered the box as I was leaving it. When his Majesty was sufficiently recovered to be informed of the treachery of his page, he with painful feelings dispensed with his future services; but notwithstanding, with that amiability which ever characterised his royal breast, he caused him to be appointed to a dis-

tinguished and lucrative situation in the East Indies. The benevolence of the Monarch had so powerful an effect on Ramus, that whilst the preparations for his voyage were in progress, he betrayed symptoms of mental aberration, the first instance of which was evinced by his calling on the Duke of Gloucester, and during the conversation he had with his Royal Highness, drawing from his pocket a pistol, which he brandished to his extreme terror. The Duke, however, having sufficient presence of mind to ring his bell, was instantly attended by his pages, who disarmed Ramus, and induced him quietly to leave the house. That Ramus had been tempted to betray his trust cannot be doubted; but as it was his first offence, and as the crime carried the punishment with it, (the severe one of ending his days in a madhouse,) it is to be presumed that he had amply atoned for his error.

On the restoration to health of his Majesty George the Third, the concerts at Carlton House became more frequent than ever. At this time the head-dresses of the gentlemen were worn remarkably high and full, with large curls, which appeared as light as feathers. The Prince, who was at all times *unique* in his dress, observing the hair of one of his friends to be uncommonly well disposed, inquired of him the name of the

friseur, and on being informed that his name was Mills, desired he would send him to Carlton House. This being done, and his Royal Highness being greatly pleased with the hair-dresser's style of arranging his *tête*, he retained him in his service, and made him one of the pages of the back-stairs. Mills now considered himself a man of great importance: he visited the theatres, became acquainted with the actors, and associated with them at the coffee-houses about Covent Garden. One night Mills, being with some of the sons of Thespis at Fox's in Bow Street, and the then fashionable nostrum, *Gowland's Lotion*, being the subject of conversation, Mills, who was more famous for the outside than the inside of a head, declared that there was nothing in the world superior to that same *Gowlus Lowshous!* This man derived a good income from the situation he held, added to which his wife, who was *young* and *beautiful*, was appointed laundress to his Royal Highness.

On the evening of the 8th of April, 1795, the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, (daughter of the Duchess of Brunswick, sister of George the Third,) was united in marriage to the Prince of Wales in the chapel-royal at St. James's. The ceremony on that occasion was splendid in the extreme, and the processions which ushered the King and

Queen, and the Prince and Princess, into the chapel, were grand and imposing. The late jolly Duke of Norfolk, though one of the leaders of the opposition, attended on that day by virtue of his hereditary office of Earl Marshal. The service was performed by Dr. Moore, then Archbishop of Canterbury. When it had arrived at that part where it is asked, "Who gives the bride in marriage?" his Majesty quickly arose from the chair on which he had been seated, by the Queen near the altar, and taking the Princess by the hand, presented her with apparent satisfaction. That part of the ceremony ended, an anthem, selected for the occasion, was sung by the gentlemen of the chapel-royal, accompanied by the usual instrumental band of the Prince of Wales, of which I was one, stationed in the gallery of the chapel. The Prince throughout the evening was so grave, that not even the music when it commenced could excite his notice, till Mr. Hudson (commonly called Bobby Hudson), one of the gentlemen of the choir of the chapel-royal, in the opening of his solo verse, suddenly blared out his stentorian voice to that degree as to make his Royal Highness look up with surprise at the person who had excited a smile throughout the chapel-royal. During the same year, 1795, when the debts of the Prince of Wales were in a

course of liquidation, by commissioners appointed by act of Parliament for that purpose, I was desired by the Prince's musical page, Mr. Cole, to send to him my account for seven years' services, which I did, to enable him to forward it to the commissioners. Having ever felt the most profound respect for my royal master, I subsequently determined not to claim the amount due to me, considering it, under existing circumstances, a delicate mode of acting, and that I should not, knowing the liberality of the Prince's disposition, be ultimately thereby a loser. That my claim was duly delivered to the commissioners admits not of a doubt, because my elder brother, Mr. J. Parke, who received the amount of his (five hundred pounds, subject to the general deduction of ten per cent), informed me, that on being asked by the commissioners if there were not two claimants of his name, replied in the affirmative. As the Prince of Wales, however, probably never heard of the dutiful mark of respect I had offered to him, I subsequently received from him no mark of his royal favour. Notwithstanding this I felt no diminution of that warm attachment which I had entertained towards his royal person ; and can with truth aver, that when informed of his demise I shed tears, the sincerity of which could not be exceeded by any of my contemporaries. His

Royal Highness soon after his marriage abandoned music, and having established a private band, principally Germans, composed of the wind instrument players of his regiment, the Tenth Hussars, they solely attended to perform at Brighton and at Carlton House. Mr. Crosdill, the original musical instructor of the Prince of Wales, informed me, that in the year 1813, during the Regency which had been formed, he had the honour of dining with his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and that during the evening he heard his band play several pieces of music with great effect. Mr. Kramer, who was at that time the leader of the band, was subsequently elected a member of the Philharmonic concert, and his name being in sound similar to that of Mr. Cramer, the leader of that concert, the former was there distinguished by the appellation of Mr. Cramer with a K.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, after he had succeeded to the throne of England, had occasionally music parties on a splendid scale, and being much pleased with the compositions of Rossini, gave a grand concert at St. James's Palace, at which the popular Italian composer was appointed to preside. During that evening the King, in his elegant and affable manner, paid particular attentions to Rossini, who, insensible to

the distinguished honour thus conferred on him by the King of a great and free people, on his Majesty observing, in the latter part of the concert, “Now, Rossini, we will have one piece more, and that shall be the *finale*,” most arrogantly replied, “I think, Sir, we have had music enough for one night,” and made his bow!

In the early part of his life, George the Fourth was the delight of the gay, and the admiration of the grave parts of society. He was a model for elegance of manners and dignified condescension, and was not only an accomplished musician, but the most graceful dancer perhaps in Europe. The fashions he set were universally adopted, and through his example the stiff formality of bag and sword in evening parties, except at court, was superseded by the easy and natural costume of frock-coat, &c. Whilst he, then Prince of Wales, was all animation, his younger brother, the Duke of York, was of such sedate and sober habits, that he had in a high quarter obtained the appellation of “The hopes of the family.” The Prince of Wales, who evinced the utmost affection for his royal brother, invited him on a particular occasion to a dinner party. After the banquet was ended, the bottle, “the sun of the table,” revolving on its axis with uncommon celerity, the effect it had on the royal Duke, who at that time was only a

convivial suckling, was such, that, not being longer able to preserve an equilibrium, he fell from his chair upon the carpet, on which, the Prince running to his assistance in “merry mood,” exclaimed, “There lies the hopes of the family!”

In consequence of the late destruction of the English Opera House by fire, the company under the direction of the proprietor, Mr. Arnold, opened (till the projected new theatre is erected) at the Adelphi Theatre for the season, and on Friday, July 16th, produced for the first time a new musical drama, intitled ‘The Skeleton Lover.’ Mrs. Keely sung a pretty ballad with such effect as to produce a general *encore*, and Mr. Hunt, who was some years ago one of the vocal corps of Covent Garden Theatre, in the music allotted to him displayed taste and precision. The music of the piece, which was composed by Mr. Rodwell, is characteristic and pleasing, and the accompaniments to the airs, &c. (particularly the wind instruments) are very effective. This gentleman during his theoretical studies judiciously placed himself for a time under professors of the different wind instruments (of which I was one), whereby he acquired a just and extensive knowledge of their capabilities. Mr. Rodwell therefore can never be placed in the awkward predicament of Mr. Butler, who composed the music to the opera

called 'The Widow of Delphi,' produced at Covent Garden Theatre in the year 1780. The latter gentleman, who had not studied any instrument but the piano-forte, having in the part for the kettle-drums (which it is well known give only two different sounds) written all the notes in the octave, on being informed that several could not be played, politely thanked the performer who beat them, and requested he would furnish him with a *scale* of the kettle-drums!!!

The King's Theatre closed on Saturday, the 7th of August, with the first act of 'Il Matrimonio Segreto,' and the first act of 'Il Turco in Italia.' Signor Donzelli, Madame Lalande, and Mademoiselle Blasis, were much and deservedly applauded. Curioni's efforts were not so successful as on former occasions. It is to be feared that his vocal powers are declining. In the former performance, 'Il Matrimonio Segreto,' the stentorian powers displayed by Signor Lablache electrified the audience: his performance however throughout the opera was admirable. The manager, although he has during the season afforded great variety, has experienced some drawbacks: the death of his late Majesty, the frequent indisposition of his *prima donna*, and the large sums exacted by his singers, one of whom, Signor Lablache, was engaged to receive eighty thousand francs (upwards of three

thousand pounds sterling,) for the season. At the end of the performances the audience applauded the singers with that degree of vehemence which, in the language of Coriolanus, seemed to say—“ Thank ye for your voices ; thank ye for your sweet voices !”

As much has been said of the enormous terms which have been of late demanded for their exertions by the Italian opera singers, I trust I shall make it appear that this system of extortion is of more ancient date than it may be generally thought, and that ever since the first regular establishment of Italian operas in England, in the year 1708, “ it has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.”

Nicolini, the great singer of that time, received eight hundred guineas for the season. Senesino, who came after him, had fifteen hundred ; and Farinelli (the great favourite of the ladies), who succeeded the latter, retired to his own country, Italy, with a large fortune, where he built a temple on his domain, and dedicated it to English folly ! The terms exacted by the opera singers continued to increase till the year 1738, when the distinguished persons who conducted the Italian operas having, from that and other causes, experienced for several seasons great losses, shut up the theatre. As regards the more modern Italian opera singers,

I can with truth aver that they have, during the last six-and-forty years, been progressively adding to their demands, greatly to the detriment of the proprietors of the King's Theatre, some of whom have ended their operatic career by incarceration or bankruptcy. Pacchierotti retired to Italy in 1784, with twenty thousand pounds. Marchesi, after singing here three seasons, departed with ten thousand. Madame Mara, Madame Banti, and Mrs. Billington, (who, though born in England, had, during her long sojourn in Italy, imbibed some Italian habits), subsequently exceeded each other; and Madame Catalani, who came here in 1806, taking advantage of the impression she had made on the public, increased her terms almost every season, until, for that of 1814, she demanded three thousand pounds salary and two benefits. These terms, which were refused to Catalani in 1814, were not, however, a great deal more than half those given to Madame Pasta in 1828; viz. four thousand five hundred pounds salary, and a benefit, insured at one thousand ! That an opera proprietor, by exerting a proper spirit, might successfully resist such extravagant demands, the following fact will sufficiently show: The committee for conducting the concerts at Norwich, in the year 1827, offered to Madame Pasta four hundred pounds to sing at three even-

ing performances in that city; but that lady refusing to sing for less than five hundred, they proposed terms to Madame Caradori Allan, which reaching the ears of Madame Pasta, she immediately, though too late, offered to sing for three hundred! It may however happen that an opera manager is compelled, by the precepts of his subscribers, to buy vocal talent at so high a rate. But he should (like the quack doctor, who, to keep his chariot, dined thrice a week on cow-heel) retrench in other respects, taking care at the same time that, by avoiding Scylla, he does not fall into Charybdis, and thereby render his performances less unique, consequently unacceptable to the public. This foreign system, which it is to be hoped has reached its acme, will probably work its own cure, and then these upstarts will, similarly to the man in the fable, regret that, by ripping up the goose, they have lost the golden eggs for ever.

THE END.

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